A Modern Exodus

Violet Guttenberg

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A Modern Exodus

A Novel

BY

VIOLET GUTTENBERG

AUTHOR OF

"NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK," "THE POWER OF THE PALMIST,"

ETC.

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PREFACE

NOT wishing my readers to be falsely impressed on perusing this novel, I wish to inform them that this is a story of the impossible, and is placed in the future for the sake of convenience. Were England other than she is, however, it would not be so impossible to issue such an edict as I have here introduced; and therefore it is a matter of congratulation and deep thankfulness to both Jew and Gentile that the attitude of our country towards her Jewish subjects is that of justice, toleration, and friendliness. At the same time, the poisonous seeds of anti-Semitism are so subtle and so easily instilled, that a warning—even in the form of fiction—may not be out of place.

With regard to the practical side of the story, I claim the author's privilege of imagination; since this is not a treatise on Zionism, but merely a novel.

VIOLET GUTTENBERG.

London, 1904.

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Period.—The Future

BOOK I

"*Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word amongst all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.*"—DEUT. xxviii. 37.

A MODERN EXODUS

CHAPTER I

OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

It was the Day of Atonement—the Great White Fast. The principal synagogue in the West End of London was crowded from the doors to the Ark, and the heat was intense. Like a flock of frightened sheep, those Jews—and they were many—who ignored the claims of public worship for over eleven months at a stretch, rushed to the synagogue on this Holy Day in order to settle their accounts with an offended Deity, and obtain exemption from service for yet another year. This Day served as a test to prove whether a man of Hebrew birth clung to the Jewish faith or not; for if he retained the very smallest respect for the tenets of his religion, he would at least put in an appearance at the synagogue, and refrain from tasting food. However lax he might be throughout the year, on this Day he would try to make reparation, lest he should be struck off from the inheritance of Israel; for if he failed to observe *Yom Kippur*, he could no longer claim—amongst his own people—to be a Jew.

People are apt to speak of "the Jews" as though they were one nation of one unvaried character, and in so doing they make a fatal mistake. The fact that Jews possess in a large measure the chameleon-like faculty of reflecting the colour—or rather the characteristics—of the country wherein they happen to reside is entirely overlooked. No wider divergence of opinion and character between that possessed by the English Jew and the Polish Jew, between the educated and the ignorant, could be imagined; yet by the easy-going Gentile the whole heterogeneous mass of the race of Israel is summed up in one category—"The Jews." Even in this small gathering of modern Israelites there were many different types. There was the old man, clad in his burial garments, and slipperless, who swayed to and fro and smote his breast with the zeal of a devotee; there was—up in the gallery—the equally old woman, her head disfigured by the *scheitel*[1] (tabooed by the modern Jewish matron), which she wore as the mark of her wifehood. There was the opulent Jew, newly imported from South Africa, with his consort above him; the diamond merchant from Holland; the English stockbroker; the German commercial traveller; the Oxford under-graduate. There was the vulgar Jewish matron, with her insufferable air of affluence and her display of diamonds; and the refined Jewish lady, with her less conspicuous attire and quieter manner. There were men and women of all nationalities and classes, bound together by one common tie, yet in temperament as opposite as the poles. And out of this crowd of more or less fervent worshippers there is but one who claims our attention,

[1] Wig.

a man of religious views so broad as to be almost heterodox, yet still in his conformity to the fundamental principles of his religion, a faithful Jew.

He belonged to one of the noblest Jewish families in England. Descended from the Sephardim, his ancestors had come over in the reign of Charles II., and his forefathers for generations had been therefore of English birth. The Selim Montellas were famous throughout the land for their wealth, their munificence in disposing of it, and their devotion to their country and its sovereign ruler. Lionel, the last of the race, proved no less worthy a representative of the ancient house. After a brilliant career at Oxford, where he had earned the respect of both dons and under-graduates for his adherence to the rules of his religion, he had entered Parliament as member for Thorpe Burstall—where his father possessed an estate. He was one of the youngest men in the House, but possessed a clear-sightedness beyond his age. His youth served to intensify rather than detract from the interest he instilled into his political duties.

It was after he left the university that his religious views underwent a change. From orthodoxy he drifted into reform—a reform which was dangerously akin to Rationalism, and then putting a stern check upon himself, he adopted a belief not unlike that of the Karaites. He tried to reject the Talmud and the whole authority of tradition, and to adhere only to the written Law; but finding this unsatisfactory, he was gradually making his way back to conventional Judaism once again. That accounted for his presence in the synagogue on this solemn occasion, for whatever his views on the lesser details of the faith

might be, on *Yom Kippur* he was as strict as the most orthodox of his *confrères*.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and vitality in the synagogue was at a somewhat low ebb. Most of the children, and those of their elders who were too delicate to sustain the rigours of an absolute fast, had gone home to lunch, leaving their stricter co-religionists to satisfy the cravings of hunger by naught but spiritual refreshment. It was in the gallery where the ordeal was found most severe, for the ladies possessed less staying power than the more hardy men; moreover, the mere fact of having to refrain from the gossip in which they delighted was in itself a trial of no little magnitude. Their faces showed signs of weariness and *ennui*, and the air of smartness which had been theirs at the beginning of the service had almost disappeared. Two or three of them created a diversion by fainting —the majority of them were too healthy to swoon. They sat still, and counted the hours and minutes to nightfall; it seemed as if the Fast would never end.

In the quietest part of the service a noise from the street was heard. A number of boys were calling out the afternoon editions of the newspapers, but although their voices floated in through the open windows, the substance of their announcement was lost. Lionel Montella almost unconsciously raised his head to listen, for he was always on the alert for new tidings of any kind, but the peculiar enunciation of the newspaper boys baffled even his acute ear. All he could make out was the word "death." Who was dead he had not the faintest idea.

He raised his prayer-book, and applied himself with renewed diligence to the text. They were

saying the *Ameedah*, and he repeated the responses with the rest of the congregation; but all the time the word "death" was at the back of his mind. It worried him so much that he was unable to give his undivided attention to the service, and when the newspaper boys repassed the synagogue, he listened to their shouts with all the intensity of which he was capable. He could not help feeling—perhaps it was a premonition—that the death was an important one, that it affected him in some way he could not define; and when at last he caught the name, the surprise which he ought to have experienced was absent—only the deep, inexpressible horror remained.

"Death of Mr. Lawrence Campbell! . . . Sudden death of the Premier!"

The words fell on the ears of the congregation like a knell. The reader paused almost imperceptibly in his chanting, the majority of the people looked at each other in horrified surprise. The name of Lawrence Campbell was synonymous with all that was noble and good, and as a loyal friend of the Jews, he had ever earned their respect and affection. Although he had occupied the high office of Prime Minister for over ten years, he was comparatively a young man, and his death came as a totally unexpected blow. What it would mean to the community remained to be seen, but like a sudden ray of light the possible consequence flashed across Lionel Montella's mind. He sank on to his seat with his brain in a whirl, and in spite of the temporary feeling of weakness brought on by his long hours of fasting, tried to think clearly. He alone of all his co-religionists knew the true and perilous position of the Jews in modern Europe at the present day. The

Alien Immigration question had reached a crisis which would have to be settled at Parliament's next session, and the issue practically depended on the unreliable temper of the Government. Various expedients for colonisation had been tried without success, for the Jews, never having been "hewers of wood and drawers of water," did not take kindly to the manual labour necessitated by such colonisation. What form the next experiment would take, therefore, was a difficult and vexed question, and one which the Premier and his subordinate, Montella, had been threshing out together for weeks. And now Lawrence Campbell, the chief, almost the only, enthusiastic champion of the Jews in Great Britain was dead. No wonder the young politician's heart grew faint within him!

The signal that the long day's service was at an end—the blowing of the ram's horn—recalled him to himself; and folding up his talith, he made his way with the others to the vestibule. The refreshing breeze from the street came as a blessed relief after the close atmosphere of the interior of the synagogue, and he leant against the balustrade for a moment before searching for his hansom. All around him the people were dispersing, and as he listened to their kindly greetings to each other, he realised the close bond of unity—more evident in the Jewish than in any other faith—which drew them together with irresistible force. A few of the men with whom he was acquainted came up to him to shake hands. One—the treasurer of the synagogue—lingered for a few moments' conversation.

"Sudden thing this—death of the Premier," he remarked, attacking the subject which was uppermost

in his mind. "Heart failure, Cohen says. Struck down all in a minute. Bad thing for the Chosen, I'm afraid."

"Yes, very," Montella returned seriously, with emphasis on the words. "I saw poor Campbell only last week. I had no idea that he was subject to heart attacks."

"Nor I either. I am sorry—very sorry. Campbell was the right man in the right place, and a difficult place it is nowadays. Can you tell me who will be likely to suceeed him in the premiership?"

A little knot of men gathered round him as he put the question, leaving their women-folk to hasten towards home and food. Lionel Montella had been singled out and recognised, and the opportunity of rubbing shoulders with him and listening to his words was too valuable to be passed by. That they were personally unacquainted with him mattered not in the least, and he was so used to being lionised that he did not dream of considering their curiosity impertinent.

"Don't you know?" he said slowly, with a slight tremor of agitation in his voice. "The successor to Lawrence Campbell will be the very last man we want to see in power. I mean Athelstan Moore."

Athelstan Moore—the avowed anti-Semite and rabid Jew-hater, a man who possessed the dangerous power of swaying men's minds by the force of his rhetoric, of fascinating them by the strength of his personality, of completely subjugating them by the influence of his invincible will. No wonder a thrill ran through the hearts of the people as Montella pronounced the name.

"That rabid enemy of the Jews!" exclaimed the

treasurer, in dismay. "Why, the lives of our poorer brethren will not be worth twopence if he is at the head of the State."

Montella's face was more expressive than he knew.

"We must not make trouble for ourselves," he said, his words belying the troubled expression in his eyes. "We must hope that Moore is not so black as he's painted. After all, he's only a man, and even as chief Minister of State he can't do more than exercise powers which are distinctly limited. Unfortunately, since the influx of Roumanian immigrants at the beginning of the century, anti-Jewish feeling among the masses has been increasingly strong. I'm afraid that it's the impolitic and regrettable behaviour of the immigrants themselves which has brought this about. It has needed all our strength to counteract this feeling, and I am afraid it will need more than ever now. One thing we must make up our minds to do, and that is to stand by each other, no matter what our social position may be. We must remember the old truism that 'Unity is strength.'"

Another eager listener had joined the group.

"Do you think it possible that Athelstan Moore may direct his spite against the upper and middle classes of Jewish society as well as the sweaters and aliens of the East End?" he asked, with a slightly foreign accent. "Or shall we be, as law-abiding citizens, exempt?"

"I cannot say," Montella replied, with hesitation. "In so far as the Jewish question includes the effect of Jewish influence upon the trade and commerce of the country, it concerns all classes from the highest to the lowest. But, friends, it is getting late; and we are most of us faint from want of food. If the

consequence of poor Campbell's death is in anyway serious, we must call a meeting in order to discuss the situation. For the present, I think we should disperse."

He had noticed the beadle waiting to switch off the light and bolt the doors. It was characteristic of the young member to avoid causing inconvenience to any person; and in this case he could see that the synagogual officer was weary from his arduous duties, and anxious to be gone. So he shook hands with each one of his willing hearers, and bade them all farewell. Then he signalled to his waiting hansom, and was driven rapidly away.

The treasurer watched the vehicle until it was out of sight.

"Fine chap—Montella," he said to a friend who stood near by. "One of the good old stock, and not ashamed to own it either. He'll give that devil Moore a *potch* if anyone can. He's got plenty of brain and heart and grit in him, or my name's not Jacob Schlapp."

The friend's enthusiasm was less effusive.

"We will discuss Lal Montella when we've put something inside us," he rejoined, taking the treasurer's arm. "Have you forgotten that it was *Yom Kippur* to-day?"

CHAPTER II

THE MONTELLAS

THE Montellas, in spite of their being the owners of a mansion in Portland Place, chose to occupy a flat in Knightsbridge, and to let their house to someone who had more use for the magnificent rooms and galleries than themselves. Ten years ago they had been renowned for their lavish hospitality and brilliant receptions; but a paralytic stroke having suddenly attacked Sir Julian when at the zenith of his popularity, they had been obliged to forego the pleasures of entertaining, and to retire into private life. The terrible affliction which had come upon her husband seemed also to have shattered Lady Montella's health; and always more or less invalided, she seldom ventured forth into the maze of society. Whenever she made an effort to be present at some function, it was only for the sake of her son; for Lionel, being her only surviving child, was the lode-star of her existence. All her thoughts, hopes, and prayers were centred on him; and that he responded so faithfully to the influence of her training was the greatest joy she possessed. Had he proved otherwise, he would most surely have broken her heart.

It was twilight, the hour her ladyship loved the best. She was reclining in an easy-chair near the window, with her hands loosely folded, and her eyes

watching the dying glory of the sunset. There was a vague something in her attitude which indicated peace—peace and contentment. It was as if she had been through all the storm and stress of life, and found a haven at the end. There were traces of suffering on her forehead, surmounted by its coronal of white hair; but the curves of her lips, and the indefinable sweetness of their expression, showed that she was neither embittered by sorrow nor hardened by experience. As wife and mother, as hostess and poor man's friend, her interests had ever been concentrated outside herself.

The tinkling bells of a clock in the adjoining room disturbed her reverie, and at the same moment the door opened to admit a girl. Pausing a moment to switch on the electric light, she advanced towards Lady Montella's chair. Her step, elastic yet firm, indicated the exuberance of youth.

"A penny for your thoughts, auntie. You look like Patience on a monument," she said merrily, sinking on to a little chair at her ladyship's side. "Are you still lamenting your sins, or have you, like myself, put them away for another year? I am so glad Dr. Ford allowed me to fast for half the day. My appetite is keener than it has been for weeks."

Lady Montella looked at the girl and smiled. Raie Emanuel was her niece only by adoption, but there was as deep an affection on both sides as if a blood relationship had existed between the two. Raie, in keeping with her name, constituted a ray of brightness in a somewhat silent household, and to its mistress was a source of comfort and delight. The eldest daughter of a large but impecunious family, her nature was a combination of practicality with

romance. She could cook a dinner or compose a poem with equal facility, and although in Lady Montella's menage the former accomplishment was never required, it was to the girl's credit that the ability was there.

"Lionel ought to be here soon," she ran on, scarcely waiting for an answer, "unless he calls at Grosvenor Square on the way. I wonder which he wants most: the Lady Patricia or his breakfast?"

"He must be tired and hungry after his long day's fast," her foster-aunt returned. "I hope he will come straight home. You are joking, Raie, in saying that. Have you any grounds for supposing that Lady Patricia is the special object of my son's interest?"

"Yes." The girl nodded vivaciously. "One has only to see them together to be sure of it. Patricia Byrne is Lionel's ideal woman—fair to look upon, fair at heart. And Lionel is Lady Patricia's hero, as indeed he deserves to be. Haven't you noticed the change which has come over him lately—the change in his opinions about women, I mean? Until a few weeks ago he was absorbed in his politics and his poor Jews. Now there is a counter attraction."

Lady Montella looked distressed.

"You are more observant than I am, Raie," she rejoined. "I have noticed nothing; perhaps I did not wish to notice—this."

She leant back in her chair, her hands interlocked. For some unaccountable reason she had not thought that her boy would go the usual way of youth, and entangle himself in a love-affair; he had always seemed much too serious and reserved for anything of the kind. Of course, she wanted him to marry some day—a girl of his own faith whom she would

choose. To allow himself to fall in love with Lady Patricia Byrne was the height of folly, and could only bring trouble on all concerned.

"I hope you are mistaken, Raie," she added, at last. "I don't think my son would do anything to give me pain."

Fond mother! who, because she has made an idol of her son, thinks he is totally devoid of the human passions which have agitated the breast of youth ever since the world began. Raie marvelled that a man should be so little understood by his nearest and dearest, but she said nothing; and at that moment the subject of their conversation himself appeared.

He came in with a number of newspapers in his hand, and having kissed his mother and inquired how Raie had fasted, informed them of the important news. He looked tired and worn; and Raie, to whom the death of premiers was as nothing compared with nearer and more practical matters, immediately hurried off to see if his breakfast were fully prepared. She returned a few minutes later, and insisted on his going to the dining-room forthwith. She would listen to nothing he had to say until he had satisfied the demands of the inner man. She captured the papers, however, and read the accounts for herself.

"Only forty-four years of age," she remarked, as she put the last one down. "Well, I suppose he will have a state funeral; it will be worth seeing. Do you think you can get us tickets of admission, Lal?"

"Raie!" exclaimed Lady Montella, in a tone of reproof. "Is that the first thing you think of—not the serious consequence of the Premier's death upon the nation, but only the excitement of watching his funeral procession?"

Lionel glanced at his foster-cousin with indulgence.

"Never mind," he said kindly. "Let Raie leave state affairs to people who are forced to consider them. Time enough to be serious when the necessity occurs."

"That's what I think," the girl rejoined, with a smile. "Auntie takes things much too seriously. By-the-bye, Lionel, will Lady Chesterwood have to put off her masked ball?"

"Unless she is personally related to poor Campbell, no. When is it going to be?"

"On Thursday week. I've been looking forward to it for months; it will be my first real ball, you know. Auntie has given me the loveliest dress you can imagine; it's a perfect dream."

"Not a nightmare, I hope," he returned, and then drew back his chair. "Well, I must away to Downing Street, I suppose." He sighed. "I wish I could look a year or so ahead."

"Do the days pass too slowly for you, then?" asked his mother, in a tone of sympathy. "It is not like you to wish away your time."

"The days pass too quickly for all I mean to do in them," he replied. "It is only because I foresee trouble in the distance, mother dear. However, I won't be a prophet of evil. Let me take a leaf out of Raie's book, and put away dull care."

Lady Montella followed him out into the hall.

"You will be back soon, I hope, dear?" she said. "I expect Miss Lorm during the evening."

"I will be back as soon as I can," he returned; "but I may be detained at Downing Street, and—and I have promised to call at Grosvenor Square."

"To see Lady Patricia?" Her voice unconsciously hardened.

"Yes; Lady Patricia and her father." A tinge of colour came into his cheeks.

His mother said no more, but kissing him lightly on the forehead, went to her room, and rang the bell for her maid. At dinner she listened to Raie's light chatter with her thoughts elsewhere, and when the meal was at an end, asked the girl for music. Raie played and sang as well as most girls of her age, and having once started, was in no hurry to cease. She amused herself, and in a lesser degree her aunt, until the footman announced the advent of Miss Lorm. Then she put her music away in the rack, and rose to greet the guest.

Zillah Lorm was a singer who owed her position in a great measure to Lady Montella's liberality. She had been introduced to her ladyship's notice some years ago as a young co-religionist who possessed an exceptional voice, but who lacked the means to ensure an adequate training; and as Lady Montella loved to interest herself in such cases, the necessary money was immediately forthcoming. Zillah went to the Royal College for three years, after which she studied in Rome and Paris. Then, through her patroness's influence, she secured engagements to sing at at homes and receptions. Now, at the age of five-and-twenty, she was one of the most popular vocalists in London.

She entered the room with the graceful self-possession which betokened the artiste. Unusually tall, and with an inclination towards embonpoint, her evening-gown of clinging silk concealed, yet at the same time revealed the rounded curves of her figure.

Her eyes, dark and luminous, wandered restlessly through the room, as though in quest of someone she desired to see ; her face, as she shook hands with her patroness and Raie Emanuel, lighted up with a winning smile.

"My son has had to go to Downing Street on account of the Premier's death," Lady Montella informed her, although there was no reason why she should apologise for his absence. "I hope he will return before you go."

Raie looked questioningly at her foster-aunt, and invited Miss Lorm to loosen her wraps. For no accountable reason a feeling of aversion existed between the two ; perhaps it was because the young girl felt small and insignificant in the presence of Miss Lorm ; and the singer was, or had been, jealous of the position occupied by Raie.

"I am in luck's way, Lady Montella," she said, settling herself on one of the silk-covered chairs in a way which made Raie's movements look awkward in comparison. "I am to be commanded to sing before the Queen-Regent early next month."

"Indeed?" Her ladyship's face lit up with interest. "It is a great honour, Zillah. I am very glad ; I am always glad when a Jewess distinguishes herself."

Zillah moved her position.

"I—I don't wish to distinguish myself *as a Jewess*," she replied hastily, with a spot of colour on her cheeks. "I am a singer, *pur et simple*. The Queen-Regent doesn't know that I'm a Jewess, nor do the powers that be who managed the affair for me know either. The name of Jew is in such ill-favour just now that I have thought it best to sink my connection with the

Chosen in case it should prove a hindrance to my career. Fortunately, although I am dark, my appearance does not betray me. Do you not think me wise, dear Lady Montella?"

"From the worldly point of view, perhaps; but I would rather have you cling to your precious heritage, my dear, especially just now, when people are so ready to seize on anything which can be considered discreditable to us. My son is doing his utmost to serve his country, and to prove himself a worthy Jew. Even those who are the enemies of our people are forced to honour him. I should like you, in the same way, to prove yourself a worthy Jewess, and so raise the standard in public opinion. What do you say, Raie?"

Raie tossed her head. "I—oh, I haven't the least respect for a Jew or Jewess who is ashamed to own it! Besides, the most superficial student of physiognomy could trace Miss Lorm's descent in her features. It is the most difficult thing in the world to hide one's Hebrew origin. A look or a word—even a gesture will show it."

Zillah bit her lip to repress a sarcastic rejoinder, then changed the subject. Secretly she made up her mind to pay Raie back when opportunity occurred. Shortly afterwards she rose to take her leave. She was very fond of dear Lady Montella, but her ladyship's dialectics on Judaism bored her excessively, and the one to whom she liked to converse was not there.

Raie hailed her departure with relief.

"I think I must be bad-tempered, auntie," she remarked, as soon as the hall door was closed. "At any rate, Zillah Lorm always rubs me up the wrong way."

"Why? I have never heard her say anything to offend you, dear."

"No, it isn't what she says; it's the way she looks at me. She always makes me say all the sharp horrid things I can think of. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself afterwards, but I wouldn't apologise for the world. And I know she's trying to set her cap at Lionel, and she knows I know it; and—and—I would much rather Lal married Lady Patricia than Zillah Lorm."

She spoke in the short, nervous way which was characteristic of herself. Lady Montella glanced at her musingly.

"I am afraid your imagination is running away with you, Raie," she returned, in a quiet voice. "First it is Lady Patricia Byrne, then Zillah Lorm. To how many more ladies are you going to engage my son?"

"To me, if you like!" The girl laughed merrily. "Don't you think I would make a good wife, auntie? But no, I am destined to be an old maid! I took the last piece of bread-and-butter at tea; and that, you know, is a sure sign."

She kissed her foster-aunt good-night, and danced along the corridor to her bedroom. Lady Montella glanced at the clock, and noticed that it was nearly eleven. She gave a sigh, and wondered what her son was doing. She thought that on this night—after he had been fasting all day—he might have stayed at home.

CHAPTER III

PATRICIA

MEANWHILE, Lionel Montella, having left his card at Downing Street, re-entered his hansom, and was driven to Grosvenor Square. The casket which contained his jewel consisted of a house situated in the quietest corner; and here the vehicle slackened speed. Having pulled the great bell, Montella was admitted by a powdered footman, and shown into one of the smaller rooms at the back of the hall. Allowing himself to be divested of his overcoat, he asked to see the Earl.

It was an extremely quiet household, in spite of its grandeur. The Earl was a peculiar individual of misanthropical temperament, who shut himself up in his study, and never mixed with the outer world unless there were some urgent necessity. The death of his wife some fourteen years ago had given him ample excuse for eschewing society; and society, being aware of his crotchety ideas, returned the compliment by leaving him severely alone.

The room to which Montella was eventually conducted was a small turret-chamber approached by a special staircase from the topmost landing. There was no electric light here, and the flickering candle-light cast weird shadows across the stone walls and tessellated floor. As he entered the room two

large blackbirds flew towards him, and encircled his head. The footman waved them away; and flapping their wings, they returned to their aviary in the embrasure formed by the window. Then the man-servant retired, to leave Montella alone with the Earl.

He was a man just bordering on middle age, but his bald head and stooping figure gave him the appearance of the aged. He was bending over a tank, with the sleeves of his little velvet jacket turned up. His dress-coat had been carelessly slung over the back of a chair. The drip of the water into the tank was the only sound to break the silence. Montella for the moment remained inert.

At last the Earl turned round.

"Oh—ah—Montella," he said, with his hands still in the water. "Roberts announced you, didn't he? I was rather—ah—preoccupied. Hope you'll excuse my shaking hands. Come here and look at—ah—some of my work."

The young man did as he was told, and advanced towards the tank, which proved to be a toning-bath. Amateur photography was the Earl's latest hobby, and one which for a while absorbed all his time. The photographs floating in the water were principally views of his country seat, but there were also a few portraits amongst them. One, of a child of about six years of age, his lordship picked up and laid in the palm of his hand.

"There!" he exclaimed, in a tone of triumph. "Can you tell me who that is?"

The face in the photograph had moved horribly, and the eyes were doubled. It might have stood for any small boy in the kingdom. Montella hesitated

before replying; but at last he received a happy inspiration.

"The King!" he exclaimed. "One can scarcely fail to recognise him. It is the King!"

"It *is* the King." Lord Torrens dipped the print lovingly in the water once more. "I photographed him in the grounds of the palace by special permission of his mother—ah—the Queen-Regent. He was a terrible little rascal to take—moved all over the place; but I've got a splendid picture of him, don't you think so? Of course it wants touching up a bit; you can understand that?"

"Oh, certainly," Montella replied, in good faith. Then he too dipped his hand in the water, and turned over the prints. He knew that the Earl liked to be humoured in his hobby, so he proceeded to ply him with questions relating to the art. Suddenly he gave an exclamation of pleasure. The portrait of a girl floated towards him—a girl with wavy hair, whose tendrils strayed on to a low but intelligent forehead; with large eyes, set somewhat far apart and full of expression; with a well-formed nose, short upper-lip and rounded chin. She was clasping a bunch of roses against her breast, and a garland of the same flowers nestled in her hair. "Lady Patricia," he said, a softened tone in his voice. "This is the best portrait of her I have ever seen."

The Earl was delighted.

"Ah, do you really think so?" he returned. "My daughter is not a good subject for a photograph; rather too fair, and doesn't look her best in repose. However, I flatter myself that I have succeeded in getting a very happy expression. You must let me give you a copy when there is one finished."

"You are very kind." He gazed at the photograph as if loath to let it go. "There is no gift that would please me more—unless it were the original herself."

He dried his hands and paced the room, overcome by an unwonted nervousness. The Earl had apparently not noticed the latter part of his speech, for he went on toning the prints with imperturbability. Montella, however, intended him to notice it, and after stalking up and down for some minutes, decided to take the bull by the horns.

"Lord Torrens," he began, feeling more agitated than when he had given his maiden speech in the House, "I have come here to-night to ask you a question on the answer to which my whole life's happiness depends. Since I have enjoyed the privilege of your friendship, I have learnt to know you and your daughter better than would have been possible in ordinary circumstances. I know that there are very few who are admitted to the intimacy of your home life as you have so kindly admitted me, and therefore I appreciate the privilege all the more. But to come to the point—I wish to speak of Lady Patricia. I have seen her constantly during the past year, and—and—" His flow of words suddenly broke down. "My lord, you are acquainted with my family, and I hope by now that you know something of me personally. Have I your permission to pay my addresses to your daughter?"

The choice little speech he had prepared forsook his memory just when it was most needed; even in his own ears the statement of his desire sounded lame. The Earl turned round slowly, and regarded him fixedly; but the monosyllable "Eh?" was all he vouchsafed in reply.

It is one of the most trying things in the world to have to repeat a difficult request. Montella began all over again, and gaining confidence, succeeded in giving an impassioned appeal. Lord Torrens listened with some little show of interest, because if there existed a tender spot in his heart, it was for his daughter Patricia ; but he was inwardly longing to get back to his beloved prints.

"I did not think you were the man to bother yourself about women," he said at last, jerking out the words in his characteristic way. "If you take my advice, as a friend, you will stick to your Parliament and your politics ; leave the women to those young fools whose chief vocation is to become ladies' men. The farther you keep away from frills and furbelows, the better for yourself."

"You preach what you have not practised, Lord Torrens," Lionel rejoined, with a smile. "I suppose that you were once in love ?"

The Earl gave an expressive gesture.

"My dear fellow, I was no less susceptible than the rest ; and my sweetheart—afterwards my wife, and Patricia's mother—was a queen amongst women. But I sometimes wish that I had never crossed her path ; for she managed to twine herself about my heart, became the chief delight of my life ; and then—"

"Then ?" questioned Montella, filling up the pause.

"Then she died ; and I was left with two infants to bring up, and a dreary waste of years before me to fill up as best I could. So you see that had I never met my wife, I might have made a career of some sort ; at least, I should have been saved a considerable amount of heartache and pain."

"And love," added the youth, secretly wondering that the prosaic and somewhat crusty exterior of the Earl should conceal the heart-feelings of an emotional being. "Is it not better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? Tennyson says so. And there is no one who will ever profit by another's experience in these affairs. So to return to my question. You will approve?"

"Have you—ah—spoken to her yet?"

"Not a word. I could not do so until I had obtained your consent. I—"

He broke off abruptly at the sound of the *frou-frou* of a woman's skirt. The small door at the top of the spiral staircase opened, and a girl in a simple white dress stood on the threshold.

"May I come in, father?" she asked; then noticed the visitor. "Mr. Montella! I did not know you were here."

She advanced with outstretched hand, her face lighting up with pleasure. The blackbirds flew down from their perch, twittering as though in greeting. The little turret-chamber seemed transformed by her presence: an air of constraint crept over the two men, and for the moment neither of them had anything to say. The Earl returned to the tank, and turned on the tap once more. The momentary emotion caused by the mention of his dead wife was now a thing of the past.

"I am very busy, my dear," he said, somewhat pointedly. "Very busy indeed. Perhaps you would like to entertain Mr. Montella below? This is my workroom, you know."

"Yes. I came up here because Mrs. Lowther has gone to bed with a headache, and I was feeling a wee

bit lonesome." She smiled. "Will you come down with me, Mr. Montella? I would like to hear what you think of my latest attempts at verse."

He rose with alacrity, and holding out his hand to the Earl, turned on him a questioning glance. Lord Torrens rewarded him with a look and gesture which implied approval. Then he continued washing his prints.

Montella was foremost in descending the spiral staircase, in order to assist Lady Patricia down the final steps. Arrived at the base, they descended the grand staircase together, and made their way to the library, which was Lady Patricia's favourite room. Here she was wont to spend many a long hour in silent communion with men and women long passed away; for books were her counsellors and friends, and supplied the companionship which, owing to her father's idiosyncrasies, she was denied. Here, too, she wrote the lyrics and sonnets in which her poetic instinct found its outlet. From her earliest childhood she had possessed the happy gift of composing verse.

She went to her desk and fetched some sheets of manuscript.

"I am glad Mrs. Lowther has gone to bed," she remarked, as she gave them to him. "She always laughs at what she calls my attempts to scale Parnassus, but I know that you won't laugh, because you understand."

"The good lady has not a poetic soul," he said, as he ran his eye down the page. "This stanza appears to be very promising, Lady Pat. May I take the MS. home with me to study whem I am quiet and undisturbed?"

She consented readily, and rolling up the sheets, he placed them carefully in his pocket. Then, closing the door, he began on the subject on which all his thoughts were set. With a glad light in his eyes, and eagerness in his voice, he told her of his love.

It caused her no surprise ; indeed, why should it ? She had invested Lionel Montella with a poetic idealism almost from the first day of their acquaintance. She admired the race from which he sprang, and which seemed to surround him with a halo of romance : she liked to see the verve which leapt into his eyes when he spoke of the ancestors who had been so cruelly wronged. More than this, she loved the man himself; therefore his declaration seemed the most natural thing in the world.

Nevertheless there was a mist in her eyes as she responded to his confession. She knew that he was not a man who was easily impressed by a woman's personality, so that to have so greatly stirred his heart's emotions was to have accomplished something indeed. She listened to his sweet nothings with her own heart beating in response, with her face upturned, and love's ardour in her eyes. And so the moments sped on—moments to be remembered in eternity—until the chiming of a clock recalled them to the prosaicism of life.

" Half-past ten already," he said, rising with reluctance. " I have stayed an unconscionable time, and my mother asked me particularly to come home."

" Naughty boy ! " she exclaimed playfully. " You must put the blame on me. Does Lady Montella know that—that—I mean, does she know about me ? "

" Not yet, dear." His brow clouded. " But she shall know very soon."

"Do you think she will be displeased?"

"Displeased!" He took her in his arms again. "My darling, who could be displeased where you are concerned?"

"But I am a Christian, Lionel, and you are a Jew."

"Yes, dear; but what does that matter? Are we to be separated for life because of the difference in our birth? The sacrifice is too great—for me, at least. Does it make any difference to you that I am a Jew?"

"None at all," she rejoined impetuously, "unless it makes me love you more."

He pressed her hand.

"I am glad—so glad—and yet—" A new thought came into his mind. "Patricia, my heart's dearest, there may be dark days coming for my people. If Athelstan Moore becomes Premier, Heaven alone knows what new plans he may be able to carry out. As a Member of Parliament, and a representative of one of the oldest Jewish families in the kingdom, it is possible I may be considered the spokesman for my co-religionists. In that case, I shall have to defend their cause with all the enthusiasm of which I am capable. So you see that while I am the friend of Christians, I must, at the same time, be the still greater champion of the Jews. Patricia, dearest, this may bring me into a most unenviable position, one which I fear to ask you to share."

He let go her hands, and paced the room in thought. The girl watched him, and a look of determination came into her eyes.

"We must not meet trouble half way, dear," she said seriously; "but whatever happens, there is nothing that affects you in which I cannot have a

share. You must do your duty to the race to which you belong, and I—I will help you to do it. I am not a Jewess, Lionel, but I know that your cause is a just one ; therefore I have made up my mind to enter into it with all my heart."

"Thank Heaven for so sweet a helper!" he exclaimed fervently. "You have taken a load off my mind."

There was a joyous light in his eyes as he kissed her good-bye. With her love to nerve him, he felt able to withstand the world. At parting, she made him promise to acquaint his parents of their engagement without delay. She was anxious to know what they would say when they heard that he intended to marry a Christian girl.

"You need not fear, darling," he assured her, with convincing ardour. "I am certain that my father, at least, will approve of my action, and my mother's blessing, if it does not come at once, will soon follow suit."

His words, although intended to reassure his sweetheart, also served as an assurance to himself.

CHAPTER IV

THE MASKED BALL

LIONEL did not feel it so easy as he had imagined to acquaint his parents of his engagement to the daughter of Earl Torrens. He tackled his father first, deeming him the easier to mollify, and succeeded in obtaining his consent to the betrothal. To win his mother's approval was a more difficult matter, and one which he knew necessitated considerable tact. He postponed the announcement until the last possible moment, hoping that if Sir Julian had informed her of the news, she would herself introduce the subject; but as two days passed without a word having been said, he was obliged to take the initiative. His sweetheart was eagerly awaiting the news.

Lady Montella listened to her son's confession with compressed lips and a cloud on her brow. She had nothing against the woman of his choice—the Lady Patricia was well-born, and all that could be desired in looks, manner, and disposition—but there was one great, insuperable objection: the girl was a Christian.

"Are there not good and sweet Jewish girls among your acquaintance that you must seek a wife of another race?" she asked, with a touch of reproach. "Could you not set your affections upon Raie Emanuel, for instance, or Zillah Lorm?"

"Mother!" He glanced at her in surprise. "I thought you would understand. Can a man just calmly and dispassionately choose a girl first, and *then* pour his love upon her? I admire Miss Lorm, and I am fond of our little Raie, but I would no more think of marrying either of them than I would think of a journey to the moon. Don't you see, mother, that my feeling for Patricia is totally different. She herself is different to all other women —whether Jewish or Christian—that I have ever met. Her thoughts are mine, her sympathies are mine, her love is mine. Oh, I can't explain it properly, but surely you must know!"

There was an eager expression, half of entreaty, in his face. His mother regarded him earnestly, and realised the effort it was costing him to break through his accustomed reserve. Her face relaxed a little of its sternness, but the determination remained.

"Lionel," she asked quietly, "are you a true and zealous Jew?"

"Yes." He looked her straight in the eyes. "At least I try to be."

"And yet you would marry a Christian?"

"I would marry the Lady Patricia; that she is a Christian is a mere accident of birth."

"Until now the Montella stock has been entirely and purely Jewish. Do you think the prestige of the family would gain by an infusion of Gentile blood?"

"If you put it that way, as long as it is 'blue blood' I do not think the prestige of family would suffer."

Lady Montella could not resist a smile, but it quickly faded.

"Is Patricia willing to become a Jewess or, rather, a proselyte?" she asked.

The young man's face clouded.

"I do not know," was his rejoinder. "Patricia and I have never discussed the subject of religion, but I believe she belongs, nominally at least, to the Church of England. If her faith is, to her, a source of happiness, I scarcely like to ask her to give it up."

Again the mother's swift glance seemed to penetrate his being; again the question passed her lips.

"Lionel, are you a true Jew?"

The colour surged into his cheeks.

"Have you any reason to doubt my sincerity?" he said.

"I trust not; but, my son, I am more far-seeing than you. A Christian mother means Christian children, a Christian household. In this way the Montella traditions will be destroyed."

"If I am blessed with sons, they shall be brought up as strict Jews." The colour still suffused his cheeks. "I promise you, and she shall promise too, that the Montellas shall ever remain a Jewish family, and faithful to their heritage."

"Unless Lady Patricia renounces her creed and embraces ours, I shall never be satisfied. For the sake of the future generation, and for the honour of the House, I must insist on this."

"Very well, I will ask her; and I now have your approval and consent?"

"Subject to this, yes."

She sighed, and received his filial kiss with moisture in her eyes. She felt that her boy was no longer her own particular idol now that he had given his heart away. Hitherto she had been the only woman to whom he offered his sweet tokens of affection; now

there was another—and for the moment more attractive—goddess to whom there was homage due. That this was in the natural course of things did not mitigate the soreness in her heart. He was her only and passionately beloved son.

"Lionel," she said softly. "May I tell you a little story? It is about myself. When I was a girl, long before I met Sir Julian, I fell in love with a young officer—a Christian. I was so much in love with him that I thought it would break my heart to give him up. But in spite of that I would not consent to become his wife; there was something that held me back."

"And that was?"

"Duty." She laid an accent on the word. "My duty to my race and faith; my duty to my parents. I sent him away, and he eventually married a girl of his own faith. The happiness of my married life you know. So you see that although duty clashed with my own inclinations at the time, it brought me the truest happiness in the end."

Lionel paced the room with bent head.

"I am disappointed in you, dear," she continued slowly. "You must not mind my telling you the truth. I had thought that with you, as with me, duty would occupy the foremost place. I had thought that your enthusiasm for our race and your ambitions in regard to the amelioration of our oppressed brethren were such that you would forget all personal inclination. Lionel, I am certain, as I look into the future, that opportunity will be given you to prove your devotion to our cause. I am certain that you are destined to exercise a great influence, both politically and socially, *as a Jew.* Can you wonder, therefore,

that I see in Lady Patricia a stumbling-block to your career? Will your co-religionists have the same opinion of you when you have married a Christian? Will you have the same voice, the same power, when you have married away from the race which you profess to love so deeply? Have you considered the question from that point of view? If not, you are merely acting on the impulse of the moment."

She looked into his face almost appealingly, but knew that all the arguing in the world would not alter his determination. He was so convinced that Patricia Byrne was his true mate, that discussion of the pros and cons was to him beside the question. He wished with all his heart to do his duty to his race, and to remain faithful to his inherited religion, and in this he believed that his sweetheart would help, not hinder him. So the result of the interview was as satisfactory as, under the circumstances, it could be; on this one point it was not possible that mother and son should think alike.

Lionel could not make up his mind to tell his beloved of the conditions of his mother's approval at once: for a short time he wished to enjoy her sweet companionship without the smallest cloud to mar the brightness of their love. He brought her to see his parents, and the Earl dined with them in state, but not a word as to their difference of religion was said by either side. The only one who ventured to object was Mrs. Lowther, Patricia's companion; but as she occupied a subordinate position, her opinion was of little consequence. Lionel sought an interview with her in private, and won her over in less than half an hour. What Patricia's relatives would have to say in the matter, however, remained to be discovered.

The Countess of Chesterwood, at whose masked ball Raie Emanuel intended to make her *début*, was the widow of Earl Torrens' nephew. An American by birth, she possessed democratic views, modified in accordance with the exigencies of her position in society. She loved to surround herself with clever people, no matter what their social status, and her house was the resort of many a young literary aspirant or budding musical genius. The Montellas admired her for her shrewd common sense and vivacious manner, and Lionel was certain that in her he and his sweetheart would find a firm ally. He took Patricia to call on her, but she was not at home ; and they did not see her until the night of the ball. Her congratulations were offered in the bright way which was one of her most charming characteristics.

" I wish you love and luck," she said.

" Luck ? " repeated Patricia. " My dear Mamie, you are thinking of the St. Leger. We don't intend to run a race."

" Luck " was the name of Lady Chesterwood's one and only racer. The little widow smiled.

" Life is a race, and you need plenty of luck to help you steer clear of the ditches," she replied. " However, let me satisfy your fastidious ear by terming it ' Providence.' Mr. Montella, you haven't asked me for a dance."

Lionel apologised, and took possession of her card. Then he glanced at her costume.

" You are an Italian lady ? " he queried, in doubt.

" I am Dante's *Beatrice ;* rather an assumption, isn't it ! But I am *so* tired of the conventional fancy-dress people. Besides, my mask will conceal

my face until midnight. What made you two choose to represent the Stuarts?"

"A lack of originality on my part, I think," Patricia replied. "The 'bonnie prince' is one of my pet heroes, so I suggested him for Lionel, and Mary Queen of Scots seemed to follow suit. By the way, Mamie, what sort of people have you here?"

"All sorts and conditions. Authors, actors, musicians, artists, a sprinkling of politicians, and many mere society people. They are all thoroughly respectable, I assure you, my dear, and as you won't be introduced, it doesn't matter if you should happen to dance with someone of whom, ordinarily, your chaperon would not approve. Here, Equality is the watchword. In the matter of this masked ball, at least, I am a law unto myself."

She bowed and swept away on the arm of a chivalrous knight. The musicians struck up the spirited tune of a new dance which had recently been invented, and the lovers, preferring to witness it rather than to take part, mounted to the gallery in order to view the *mise en scène.* The ball-room was decorated in white and gold, the clusters of electric light arranged to form huge daffodils hanging at measured intervals from the painted ceiling. The musicians were almost hidden by a bank of flowers, consisting principally of orchids and the rarest ferns; a similar bank adorned the other end of the room. The motley dresses of the guests—some attractive, some merely grotesque—lent a brilliancy which was somewhat bizarre in its effect. To the onlookers, the combination of personalities was curious—perhaps not without significance to some who were there.

"There is Oliver Cromwell dancing with a

charming little *vivandière*," observed Patrica, with amusement. "What must the shade of that worthy Puritan think—if think it can?"

"Let us hope that in the course of centuries it has gained sense," Lionel responded lightly. "Do you not recognise the *vivandière?* It is our Raie."

"Miss Emanuel? How *petite* she looks; and the Cromwell, who is he, I wonder?"

"I have no idea; but we had better avoid him, hadn't we? Cromwell was rather antagonistic towards the Stuarts, you know."

She laughed. "All the more reason why we should attempt a reconciliation now. Don't be surprised if you see me as his partner a little later on."

The lovers were obliged to separate when the music came to a close, for both were engaged elsewhere. Patricia was taken back to Mrs. Lowther, and Lionel went off to find "Cleopatra," otherwise Zillah Lorm. He saw his sweetheart, a few minutes later, dancing with a courtier of the period of Louis XIV., and could not help remarking how sweet she looked. Miss Lorm's eyes gleamed through the eyelets of her mask as she made a response; she was not one of those who care to hear any individual of their own sex praised.

"I must congratulate you on your engagement, Mr. Lionel," she said, with a slight effort. "I was somewhat surprised when Lady Montella informed me of the news. I did not think that you—of all people—would marry without the pale; but, of course, there is no Earl's daughter to be found among the Jews."

The latter part of her speech was spoken jestingly,

but the sting was no less keen. The young man's face coloured beneath his mask. Had anyone else proffered such a remark, he could only have received it as an insult. Restraining the hasty rejoinder which rose to his lips, he kept silence, and Zillah, seeing that her dart had struck home, immediately changed the subject. But the pleasure of the evening was spoilt for Montella, and a troubled expression settled on his brow. It occurred to him that the singer had perhaps unconsciously foretold the decision of public opinion—namely, that he was marrying the Lady Patricia Byrne on account of her noble birth, and in order to strengthen his position as a member of the aristocracy. He knew that public opinion was never inclined to ascribe a man's action to lofty and disinterested motives, but in this case it would vex him greatly if he were misunderstood.

His mind was busy all the time he danced, and Zillah Lorm might have been miles away, so little was he influenced by her charms. The room was crowded, for it was close on midnight, when the culminating point of the evening would be reached. It needed some amount of care on the part of the men to lead their partners gracefully through the maze of dancers, and two or three times Zillah narrowly escaped colliding with the others. Montella—probably because his thoughts were elsewhere—was unusually awkward, and just as he was guiding his partner round a difficult corner, he accidentally trod upon a lady's dress. There followed the sound of tearing lace and splitting seams, and an exclamation of anger escaped from the lady at having been stopped short in that unpleasant way. Her partner —the Oliver Cromwell whom Patricia had noticed

earlier in the evening—insisted that the offender had been guilty of gross carelessness, and waiving the young man's apologies, proceeded to harangue him on the subject. There was something so aggressive in his manner that Montella felt his temper rise, and gave vent to a heated rejoinder, quite foreign to his general equability. The "Cromwell" took it up, determined to give his pugnacious propensities full sway, whilst the ladies stood by and listened uncomfortably to the wordy war.

"You have ruined the lady's dress, and spoilt her evening," he said, glaring at the culprit as if he were a schoolboy. "And all you do in return is to stand there and make lame apologies. I should think the least you could do would be to make amends like a gentleman."

"Certainly. What can I do? If this lady will kindly tell me, I shall be happy to do it. I have already expressed my deep regret that the accident should have occurred."

The lady gathered her train over her arm.

"I accept the apology of 'King Charles,'" she said, her vexation already subdued. "It is not worth while quarrelling about."

The clock struck twelve as she spoke, and as the last chime died away, the order was given to unmask. The two men fronted each other, and simultaneously uncovered their faces. Montella almost involuntarily gave a start, for the countenance of his opponent was curiously and unpleasantly familiar. He had seen it pictured in all the illustrated journals in the kingdom, cartooned in *Punch*, caricatured elsewhere; he had seen it scowling at the Opposition in the House, and at the anxious journalists in the Lobby.

It was most unfortunate that this regrettable circumstance should be connected with his first personal introduction to the man.

There was a moment's silence, during which the young politician's eyes fell like an abashed schoolboy. The "Cromwell" was the first to speak.

"Your name?" he demanded curtly.

"Selim Montella."

"Montella? member for Thorpe Burstall?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Mine is—as you may know—Athelstan Moore."

He offered his arm to his partner, and without another word, turned shortly away. Zillah Lorm looked after them with increasing interest.

"The new Premier!" she exclaimed, as soon as they were out of earshot. "Athelstan Moore, the Jew-hater! Was it wise to offend him, Mr. Lionel?"

"Wise? It was the most foolish thing I ever did in my life," he rejoined, with a short laugh.

It was amusing—to the singer—to witness his discomfiture.

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF FERDINAND

ACTING on his mother's advice, Lionel Montella wrote a letter of apology to the Premier, and received a short note of acknowledgment in return. It was some time before he could overcome his vexation at the unfortunate encounter, even though he was assured by his confrères that the destiny of a nation is not affected by petty personal spite. He knew that it was good policy on his part to conciliate the chief Minister of State, instead of which he had done the direct opposite by personally offending him.

The new Premier's attitude towards the Jewish community soon made itself felt. The greater part of the press—the part which was open to bribery and corruption—was in his favour, and did not hesitate to voice his opinions and echo his antagonism. About this time a celebrated Consolidated Trust, of which the principal directors were South African Jews, went to destruction, making one of the most sensational failures on record. Hundreds of people were ruined, but the directors managed to emerge unharmed, and the rumours of swindling on their part were left unrefuted. Immediately the papers expressed their sympathy for the unfortunate Gentile victims who had been preyed upon by swindling Jews, and long leaders declared that such

things should not be. Following the rule in such cases, the whole Hebrew community was made to suffer for the reprehensible actions of the few. Public feeling—always ready to rush to extremes—ranged itself conclusively on the side of the anti-Semites; and the man in the street, as well as the music-hall artiste, kept his sneer ready for the unfortunate Jew.

All this did not affect the Montellas so keenly as those who were more in touch with the masses. They read the papers, and inwardly burned with indignation, but from the taunts which greeted the ears of their poorer brethren they were happily exempt. Lionel went out and about, never seeking to conceal his origin from those who despised his race; but there was something in the influence of his personality which forbade any remark of disparagement to fall in his hearing. Raie Emanuel was the only member of the household who was to some extent personally concerned. She went to see her relations in Canonbury, and found them smarting under what they considered a cruel rebuff. Their only son—a smart youth of nineteen—had been dismissed from the office in which he had hoped to obtain promotion, and the two little girls had been expelled from their ladies' school.

"Expelled!" Raie exclaimed, in dismay. "But why? what have they done?"

For answer her mother handed her the note she had received from the principal.

"That's all," was her reply.

> "*Miss Perkins regrets that owing to the wishes of some of the parents of her scholars she is obliged to ask Mrs. Emanuel to remove her two daughters,*

Pearl and Charlotte, from the school. Miss Perkins ventures to respectfully suggest that the girls would be happier if educated at a Hebrew school, or by a Hebrew governess at home."

Raie tossed the note impatiently aside.

"I wish people wouldn't call us 'Hebrews,'" she said. "It irritates me. Well, I suppose Pearl and Lottie will be able to exist without the advantages obtained at Miss Perkins' seminary. But how absurd it all is. As if Pearl and Lottie were the least bit different to the Smiths, Jones, and Robinson girls!"

"And I'm no different to the other chaps at the office," Walter added, in an aggrieved tone; "but just because old Blank has taken a dislike to the name of Jew, I've got the sack. I wish I'd never been born a Jew."

"Oh, you must not say that," Raie said reprovingly. "It is a great privilege to be a Jew, and if Christians believed what they preach, they would give us the honour which is our due."

This little speech was *à la* Lady Montella, whose views the girl unconsciously imbibed. The Emanuels regarded Raie as the oracle of the family, and looked up to her as living on a higher plane than themselves. Mrs. Emanuel was a widow, with six children and a small income. It had been no easy matter to rear and educate these children, even though the eldest had been taken off her hands at the age of fourteen. The second girl, Harriet, had just become engaged to the son of a wealthy stockbroker, which was a matter for congratulation to the Emanuels and their relatives. Harriet was a bright girl of seventeen, with what her mother called a "taking" manner. She contributed

to the family purse by teaching music at a kindergarten school, and was out when Raie arrived.

"We've been looking at houses all the week," Mrs. Emanuel said, when the girl inquired after her sister. "The sooner they get settled the better. I don't believe in long engagements; never did."

Raie considered a moment.

"I wonder if Harriet will be happy with Harry Levi," she said thoughtfully. "He is not a man I could care for in the least."

"You never did like him," her mother remarked; "but then you've not got to marry him, so it doesn't matter. He seems affable enough, I think. Have you any reason for your dislike?"

"Only that the Montellas do not approve of his family. Harry Levi's father waxed fat over the Consolidated Trust concern, and Lionel says that Harry himself is not over-scrupulous. Lionel Montella would not say a thing like that unless there were good reason."

Mrs. Emanuel regarded her contemplatively.

"You seem to think a great deal of Lionel Montella," she rejoined. "You always talk about him as if he were a prophet or a prince. I shall not be at all surprised when I hear that he has fallen in love with you and asked you to marry him. Well, it would be a great *simcha*[1] for us, I am sure. The *Jewish Chronicle* would give you a notice—'*A marriage has been arranged between Mr. Lionel Selim Montella, M.P., only son of Sir Julian and Lady Selim Montella, and Miss Raie Emanuel, eldest daughter of Mrs. Joshua Emanuel, late of Liverpool.*' Wouldn't it make the Canonbury

[1] Joy.

people sit up, eh? Instead of Mrs. Abrahams snubbing me like she does, she would come and implore me to attend her next dinner-party; and I would say—'So sorry: I've promised to dine with dear Lady Montella.'"

Raie put up her hand, as though to stay her mother's garrulity.

"Mamma!" she exclaimed, her cheeks tingling, "I wish you would not talk like that. It's so vul—so horrid. I would not marry Lionel Montella, even if he asked me, because I do not consider myself fitted to become his wife. As he will not ask me, however, I shall be saved the trouble of declining. Have you not heard that he is engaged to Lady Patricia Byrne?"

"What!" Mrs. Emanuel sat bolt upright. "This is news, indeed. Who is Lady Patricia What's-her-name? A Jewess?"

"No; a—Christian—the daughter of Earl Torrens—gloriously beautiful, and with a face like a Greuze. She is far more suitable as a wife for Mr. Montella than a plain, insignificant little creature like myself could ever be."

There was nothing either of mock modesty or bitterness in her words. She knew that she was small and slight, with ordinary features and ordinary abilities. She did not know that when she spoke her eyes sparkled with animation, and that the sweetness of her smile amply compensated for the irregularity of her features. She did not know either that there was a *naïveté* about her manner which endeared her to those with whom she came into contact. Perhaps, had she known, the charm would no longer have been there.

"Lionel Montella has no right to marry a *shicksa*,[1] even if she does belong to the aristocracy," was Mrs. Emanuel's stricture. "If you are not good enough for him, why doesn't he marry a Rothschild? It must be a terrible disappointment to his father, especially after the trouble he has had with Ferdinand."

"Who is Ferdinand?" asked Raie, her cheeks still burning.

"Ferdinand Montella, of course. Sir Julian's son by his first wife, who was a Miss Klonsberg of Birkenhead, and second cousin of your poor papa's step-brother's wife. Do you mean to say, child, that you've lived with the Montellas all this time without ever hearing of Ferdinand, or that I never told you about him? It seems almost incredible."

Raie became interested.

"I have never heard the name until you mentioned it just now," she replied. "Tell me all about him, please."

Mrs. Emanuel was fond of relating the personal history of anyone with whom she happened to be acquainted.

"Ferdinand is the skeleton in the Montellas' cupboard," she began, giving her daughter time to digest the statement. "His mother died when he was born, and until his father married again he was brought up by a relation of the Selim Montellas. He was expelled from Eton, and ran away from boarding-school, and was the sort of little monster who would never be able to abstain from wickedness outside a reformatory. When he was about eighteen, he did something shady—I don't quite know what it was,

[1] Gentile.

for the matter was hushed up, but I believe he tried to embezzle, or something of the sort. Anyway, Sir Julian disinherited him, cut him out of his will, and sent him off to Australia with just enough money to pay his passage. Since then, the name of Ferdinand has been tabooed by the Montella family, which, I suppose, accounts for your ignorance of the matter."

Raie's eyes were wide open.

"Do they never hear from him?" she asked.

"I don't know; but I heard that Sir Julian once received a letter from him, and returned it unopened. You ought to know whether they receive letters from Australia or not."

"I never trouble myself about the Montellas' correspondence; they receive letters from all kinds of places. Besides, Ferdinand may have left Australia. How long ago did it all happen?"

Mrs. Emanuel thought a moment.

"Let me see," she replied musingly. "It was just after Pearl was born. I remember quite well, because Lady Montella paid me a visit, and I was wearing a pale-blue dressing-gown trimmed with Irish lace. It was the first day I sat up in my room. It must be about eleven years ago. Ferdinand—if he is still alive—will be about thirty."

"So old?" To Raie thirty seemed like middle-age. "What a strange story; it quite fascinates me, and"—there was a touch of excitement in her voice—"why, if there is an elder son, Lionel will not succeed to the title and estate."

"To the estates, yes; to the title, no. Sir Julian cannot will away the baronetcy, much as he might like to do so. Lionel will never be a baronet unless his step-brother dies."

"Poor Lal! But I do not think he has much craving for a title; he is not that kind of man. I wonder why Lady Montella has never mentioned her step-son to me?"

The matter gave her food for speculation during the remainder of the day. It seemed so strange that Sir Julian—the mild, unobtrusive Sir Julian—should go to such lengths as to disinherit his own son. The more she thought about the scapegrace the more her heart went out to him, although she knew that her sympathy was probably undeserved. When she returned to the flat she routed out an old family album, and carefully turned over the leaves. There were photographs in abundance of Lady Montella in different positions and dresses, chiefly dating from her early wedded days. There were photographs of Lionel in the various periods of infancy, as well as of the two little children who had died. Raie was deeply interested in them all, but she glanced at them cursorily in her eagerness to find the one she sought. At last her attention was arrested by a carte-de-visite in platinotype of a youth in a golf blazer, club in hand. It had evidently been taken some years ago, and was partially discoloured. The face of the young man was somewhat sensual in character, the mouth weak, but the eyes, on the contrary denoted intellect, and were so like Sir Julian's that Raie looked at them in doubt. Flicking the dust from the album, she carried it into the study, where Lionel was writing.

"Lal," she demanded, as he put down his pen, "is this your father when he was a young man?"

Montella glanced at the photograph, then up at the girl.

"Where have you been rummaging, Raie?" he

remarked, with curiosity. "This photograph is not my father, but a lad who went abroad a long time ago. I am afraid I must not tell you his name."

"It is Ferdinand Montella," she returned boldly. "You see I know."

He regarded her with surprise. "Who told you?" he asked, in his quiet way.

"I guessed it; but mamma was talking to me about Ferdinand to-day. I did not know there was such a person in existence. There seems to be quite a mystery about him. May I not know what it is, Lal?"

"You surely do not desire to know what my parents wish to keep secret, do you, Raie?"

"Oh, no—if you put it like that; but I did not think there was any harm in asking. Perhaps Aunt Inez will not mind telling me now that I am no longer a child."

"I should advise you not to mention the subject for the present, Raie," he answered seriously. "It isn't worth while raking up a story of the past which people would rather forget, is it? Perhaps, if you wait a little while, my mother will tell you of her own accord."

Raie quenched her thirst for information, and acquiesced, but still regarded the pictured face intently. There was an expression in the eyes which took her fancy; and in spite of the weakness of the mouth, the lips indicated good-humour.

"I like Ferdinand Montella," she said decidedly, with a secret wonder at her own effusiveness. "He may not be perfect, and I suppose, from what mamma says, he is something of a scapegrace; but he has rather a nice face, I think. If ever he comes back I shall stand up for him."

She was such an impetuous child.

CHAPTER VI

A HOUSE OF MOURNING

SIR JULIAN was very ill. His physician had to be rung up in the middle of the night, and arrived to find him in an exceedingly critical condition. Raie, tucked up in her little white bed, awoke with a start to hear footsteps in the corridor, and the subdued sound of voices. Hastily attiring herself in her dressing-gown, she unlocked her door and peered out to see what was happening. As she did so, the bald head and gaunt figure of the physician emerged from the morning-room, followed by Lady Montella in deshabille. Raie, not wishing to be noticed, shrank back into her own room; but a few minutes later she put her head out again, and espied a maid.

"Maggie!" she called, in a whisper. "Mr. Lionel isn't ill?"

"No, it's Sir Julian; had another stroke. They think it's the end. Mr. Lionel has gone for the rabbi."

"Oh!" There was a scared look on her face. She called the girl into her room, and shut the door. "It's frightfully sudden," she remarked, sinking on to a little wicker chair. "He was normal when Lady Montella went to bed."

"Yes, miss, it came on all of a sudden like. Those things always do. I remember my grandfather whom

we buried a year come Christmas; he had St. Vitus's dance—the twitchings, you know, and—"

"Don't tell me," interrupted the girl, with a shudder. "I've got the creeps already. Tell me, Maggie, do you think I ought to go into Sir Julian's room when the minister comes? I don't want to go, because I feel so horribly nervous, and I've never been near anyone who is dying before, but if—if Lady Montella expects it—?"

"I should go back to bed if I were you, miss," the servant advised. "There is no occasion for you to go near a death-bed unless you are obliged. You will not do Sir Julian nor my lady any good by upsetting yourself."

"No, but I don't want auntie to think me unkind. Will you ask her, please, Maggie? Tell her I send my love, and am very sorry; and if she wants me, I'll come."

The maid rose with an air of reluctance and took the message. Two minutes later she returned. Her ladyship sent her love, and wished her niece to go to sleep without frightening herself. Everything that was possible was being done for the patient, therefore her presence could not assist.

Raie jumped back into bed and snuggled down, with a sigh of relief; but sleep was impossible. She was on the alert for every sound, and heard the coming of the minister with a flutter of excitement at her heart. The atmosphere seemed to be charged with a sense of death, and the silence seemed more acute because occasionally broken by subdued snatches of conversation. She buried her head beneath the counterpane, as though in fear of beholding the King of Terrors in visible form. She recollected all the

gruesome stories she had heard of death and the dying, and did her best to induce a nightmare. She imagined she felt the passing of Sir Julian's soul, and a tremor ran through her being at the thought. Wondering if all were over, she heard the physician take his departure. It seemed as if morning would never come, for long hours passed without bringing light. Eventually, however, she awoke out of a short and troubled sleep to hear the yodel of the early milkman. The long night was over at last.

At breakfast-time she entered the morning-room, scarcely knowing how to frame the question which rose to her lips. Lionel Montella was reclining in the easy-chair with his eyes closed; no doubt he was tired after his sleepless night. He opened his eyes at her approach, and glanced at her wearily. Then he gave her the usual matutinal greeting.

"You look worn out," she observed sympathetically. "If I were you I should go and rest until lunch-time."

He shook his head.

"My father is dying," he rejoined, in a low voice. "Did you not know?"

"Yes." She did not tell him that she had made up her mind that Sir Julian was already dead. "I am so sorry, Lionel. You must feel upset, and poor auntie, too. Where is she?"

"In the sick-room; she will not leave his side. I have begged her to take some rest, but she is determined to stay with him until a change occurs."

They sat down at the table, but neither of them could eat. Lionel left his omelette untasted, and his letters unread; and Raie forbore to glance through the newspaper, as was her daily custom. After breakfast, she screwed up her courage and knocked

at the door of Sir Julian's room. She had made up her mind that it was her duty to visit the old man; in the daytime the ordeal did not seem so great.

He was awake, and droning Hebrew prayers in an inaudible voice in company with the minister. Lady Montella sat by the bedside, her beautiful face drawn and anxious. Raie went over to her and kissed her without a word; she did not know quite what to say. She was a sensitive girl, and often restrained herself from mere shyness; but Lady Montella knew her well, and understood.

Presently Sir Julian made as if he would sit up. "Ferdinand!" he exclaimed, and then again, "Ferdinand!" He had not mentioned the name for ten years. Lady Montella rose from her seat with a start; Raie remained inert, but the name attracted her attention.

The sick man gazed at them as if he were dazed.

"Ferdinand," he repeated; "I thought he was here. I don't want to see him." His words came with difficulty. "Send him away. Tell him he has brought down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Lady Montella bent over the bed.

"Ferdinand is not here," she repeated, in a low voice. "We do not know where he is; but if we can find him, will you not forgive him?"

"No. He shall not have a penny." His words grew fainter. "He is no more my son. He sold—his—birthright—for—a mess of pottage."

Raie listened with all her ears, but the dying man did not speak again, and soon fell into the lethargy which preceded the end. The physician came again, but the baronet was beyond the reach of human aid.

At two o'clock in the afternoon Lady Montella was led out of the room, half-fainting. Sir Julian was dead.

Raie had never been in a house of death before, for her father had been drowned at sea. She was too shy to go in to her foster-aunt at once, and wandered in and out of the darkened reception rooms as if she were unable to rest. The household was in a state of confusion, for it was Friday, and therefore necessary that the preliminary burial rites should be performed before the Sabbath fell. She heard Lionel and the minister arrange the details, and afterwards she saw the repulsive-looking *wachers*[1] who had come to stay with the body until Sunday, when the funeral would take place. There were people coming and going all the afternoon, and she was obliged to have her tea in solitude. After it was over she was sent for to Lady Montella's boudoir.

She obeyed the summons without delay, and clung to her foster-aunt with the tears welling up in her eyes. When the first outburst of emotion was over, Lady Montella asked her if she would like to go home until after the funeral; it would be so very dull for her in the house of mourning. Raie conquered her first impulse and decided to remain. She did not feel justified in leaving Lady Montella alone in her sorrow.

It was indeed a dull week. In accordance with Jewish usage all the blinds in the flat were kept down for seven days instead of being pulled up directly after the funeral. The principal mourners, including two of Sir Julian's sisters, sat on low chairs to lament and receive the condolences of their friends,

[1] Professional watchers by the dead.

whilst near by a tiny float burned in a glass of oil as a memorial of the dead. Every evening a service was held in the drawing-room, attended by most of the Jewish gentlemen of the Montellas' acquaintance, and not a few strangers. It was Lionel's melancholy duty to say *Kaddish* for his father, which prayer he would have to repeat daily until his term of mourning expired.

One of the first visitors to offer her condolence was Lady Patricia Byrne. Accompanied by Mrs. Lowther, she drove up in a closed carriage, bringing a beautiful wreath composed of lilies and violets. As no flowers were permitted to decorate the coffin, however, the wreath was placed in the room where the *shiva*[1] was held. It was the first opportunity Lady Montella's relatives and friends had of observing Lionel's future wife, and they did not scruple to make the most of it. Attired in complimentary mourning, with a black picture hat to set off the fairness of her hair and complexion, and carrying herself with an unaffected but distinguished air of grace, the girl certainly satisfied their critical eyes. With her face lit up with honest sympathy, she conversed with the mourners in a way which proved her tact and her knowledge of Jewish customs. Lionel's face glowed with pride and gratification at the presence of his beloved.

Mrs. Lowther was a colonel's widow, fair, fat, and forty. She was devoted to her charge, but she did not understand the girl in the least. She was much too prosaic and matter-of-fact to enter into the hidden depths of Patricia's temperament; and although she had lived with her for years, she

[1] Mourning.

knew only her exterior. Her manner towards Lionel Montella's relatives was decidedly distant, and sitting apart, she did not attempt to join in the conversation. She showed unmistakably that she had come merely for Patricia's sake, and not for her own. Her face expressed disapproval as they re-entered the carriage and were driven homewards.

"You are the most curious girl I ever came across, Pat," she said, with a sigh. "I wonder what your poor mother would have thought of you had she lived."

"*À propos* of what?" interrogated Patricia, with wonder.

"Why, your foolish engagement to this young man, of course."

Patricia's brow contracted.

"I thought you liked him," she said.

"Yes; I've nothing against him personally, but I do not approve of your becoming connected with a Jewish family."

"I am not going to marry the family," the girl corrected amiably. "I have no desire to have more than one husband."

Her chaperon frowned.

"You ought not to joke on this subject, Patricia," she rejoined. "Your words confirm my opinion: you do not realise the gravity of the step you intend to take."

"Yes, I do—to its fullest extent. That is why I have allowed Mr. Montella to give me an engagement ring."

"Do you mean to say that you really have anything in common with those people—the people we have just left?" Mrs. Lowther asked, still unconvinced,

"Cannot you see that they live in a world of their own, cemented by their religious and national customs? You may attempt to enter that world, but you must for ever remain an outsider. Even if you marry a Jew, you are not, and never can be, a Jewess. There is no strain of Oriental blood in you."

"Do not be so sure. I believe if I choose to look up the family tree I shall be able to discover some remote Hebrew ancestor. But that is nothing. Lionel is quite as British as I am. The Torrens were originally French."

"What shall you do?" pursued her chaperon, unwilling to leave the subject. "Become a Jewish proselyte, or turn Mr. Montella into a Christian?"

"I do not see the necessity for either," Patricia rejoined, with a slight flush; "but one thing is certain. Situated as he is, Lionel cannot possibly forsake the faith of his forefathers. Were he to do so, the whole fabric of his Jewish inheritance would be shattered."

"Then I suppose that if you were to find it necessary, you would become a pervert rather than he?"

"I cannot answer that at the moment. But why discuss the matter until we are obliged to consider it?"

"Why should we shirk it simply because it is disagreeable? It is one that will have to be faced as soon as you take any definite steps towards marriage."

The girl leant back against the cushions with an expression of weariness.

"We shall not be married until Mr. Montella's year of mourning is at an end, so I shall not have

to decide hastily," she answered. "I shall do what appears to me to be the best. Religion is not meant to separate man and wife."

Mrs. Lowther sighed. "What a pity you have an Agnostic for a father," she said.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNEMPLOYED

MRS. LOWTHER'S remark was not without foundation. The Earl, despite the fact that he was patron of more than one living in the country, had severed his connection with the Established Church some years ago, and now professed no religion, save that of Agnosticism. His son—a youth at Sandhurst—followed in his wake, talked grandiosely of the First Cause, and pinned his faith on Huxley. Patricia saved the reputation of the family—in the eyes of her father's tenants, at least—by attending the Parish Church regularly when she was in the country; but as Patricia's religion had never been properly moulded, it was liable to variation. Her first finishing governess being a Roman Catholic, her youthful mind had been filled with the mystic saint-lore of the Roman Church, and she fell deeply in love with St. Patrick, her patron saint. As Patricia had always been deeply in love with somebody or other since the days of her swaddling clothes, however, her father was not greatly concerned, and expressed no surprise when she told him one morning that she found Mariolatry and Saintolatry detestable, and asked to have the Roman Catholic governess sent away. Good St. Patrick was dislodged from the little niche she had accorded him, his image was

shattered into a hundred pieces, and Patricia was heart-whole once more. The next phase through which she passed was that of admiration for Comte and Swedenborg, but as the ethics of both were beyond her comprehension, she was little influenced by either. From Positivism she found her way into Unitarianism, and with her usual craving for some great teacher whom she delighted to honour, she made Ralph Waldo Emerson—or rather his writings —her oracle. It was somewhat curious that Patricia's religion always concentrated itself around some *person*, yet she did not seek to render her homage to a personal God. Her only experience of Christianity other than Romanism was the stern Evangelicism of her old nurse, and this creed, with its narrow interpretations and material heaven, she found equally as repellent as the former. Although not lacking in spiritual perception, she had not yet rightly understood the divine personality of the Incarnate Deity; she admired Christ, it is true, but in the same way she admired Gautama—the founder of Buddhism—and Confucius. To her, the heaven of the Christian and the Nirvana of the Buddhist were almost synonymous terms; and the gospel of right living the only one that was necessary. So that when her lover suggested with much diffidence that she should become a member of his own faith, she did not meet his proposal with the firm refusal he had anticipated.

They were sitting under the trees in one of the quietest spots in Kensington Gardens, glad to escape for the moment from the din and roar of the traffic. Although late autumn, the air was mild and dry, and Patricia allowed her sables to fall from her shoulders and to rest on the back of the chair. She listened to

her lover's words with animation in her face, and wonder in her eyes; she could not make an immediate reply.

"The idea is so curious, so difficult to grasp," she said, when he had finished. "Judaism seems so formidable to the uninitiated. I am afraid I should break the laws a hundred times a day."

"I do not think you would. Judaism does not demand so much from a woman as from a man. All a Jewess has to do is to see that her mènage is ordered in accordance with Jewish law, and to bring up her children in the Jewish faith. More will not be expected of you than that; and as we can have a Jewish housekeeper, you need not be worried with the details of the dietary and other laws."

"But what of my own personal religion?"

"As long as you keep to Theism—the absolute Unity—you can believe what you please," Montella replied. "So you see your Judaism need not be so difficult after all."

Patricia's eyes waxed thoughtful.

"You must give me a few days to think it over," she said, after a short pause. "You are not in a hurry, dear?"

"Not at all. I promised the mater I would ask you. She is such an enthusiastic Jewess."

"Yes; I admire her for it. It is a wonder she does not live in the Holy Land."

Lionel smiled.

"I really believe she would, if Palestine were a Jewish country," he replied. "She cherishes a grudge against the Sultan for shilly-shallying over the affair all these years. She is, like myself, an ardent Zionist."

They rose from their chairs, and made their way

towards the Albert Gate. Patricia was unusually vivacious, and giving a truce to serious subjects, chatted in lighter vein. When they reached the main road, however, they were abruptly silenced. The smile faded from the young Member's face, and the girl looked on with equal gravity.

The traffic was being stopped by a procession—a procession characterised by sordidness, for those who took part constituted the great body of the unemployed in the metropolis. Four abreast they walked, dirty, unkempt men, with ragged clothes and emaciated faces. They had turned out in hundreds, organised presumably by a trade-union, in order to enlist the sympathy of a good-natured public. Here and there banners were displayed, bearing the legend :— "*Unemployed and starving*"; "*British workmen thrown out by aliens*"; "*Employ British labour*"; "*Boycott alien labour*"; "*Boycott foreign Jews*," and other numerous inscriptions. Along the route, which was guarded by the police, men were collecting money from the passers-by. It was indeed a sight to move the most phlegmatic.

Patricia almost involuntarily tightened her grasp on her lover's arm. A more depraved-looking set of human beings she had never seen. Some, it is true, were stalwart Britons, or had been before the starvation process had set in; but the majority of them were unable to hold themselves erect from sheer weakness, and the dogged expression of misery was on all faces alike. The expression haunted the girl for weeks; it suggested to her naught else but the faces of lost spirits in Hades. She turned away with a shudder.

"Terrible!" she exclaimed unsteadily. "It makes me feel quite ill."

"Do not look, dear," Montella advised, with solicitude. "Such sights are not for you."

"Oh, but I must look." She turned back again. "One cannot shirk such a grim reality. I knew that while we were living in luxury there existed thousands who had not the bare necessities of life, but I have never had the fact pressed home so forcibly before. I feel as if I had no right to wear these expensive sables—which I could so easily do without—when these poor creatures have nothing to eat. The look in their eyes condemns me. Cannot we do something to help them, Lionel? Surely there must be something terribly wrong somewhere, or else we should never see such a degrading sight as this."

She unfastened the magnificent diamond brooch she wore beneath her jacket, and impulsively cast it into the collecting-box; her tiny gold purse with its contents followed suit. Her lover, even if he thought her proceeding rash, did not remonstrate; he too divested himself of all the gold in his possession.

"The condition of these people is not exactly the fault of the Government," he replied thoughtfully, as they moved on towards Knightsbridge. "It is always disastrous to trade when the supply exceeds the demand. It makes labour so cheap that the men cannot ask more than a starvation wage."

"But what is the reason?" she asked, with eagerness. "It seems almost incredible that all these hundreds should be thrown out of employment."

"Have you not noticed the banners?" he returned. "'Alien labour'—that is at the root of their distress. It is hateful to me to have to acknowledge it—nevertheless the fact remains that the influx of pauper Jews from the Continent has been enormous

during the past few years. Athelstan Moore once introduced a Bill in Parliament for the suppression of alien immigration; but there was some flaw in it, and it was thrown out."

"Did you vote for or against?"

"Against. You see, whatever my private opinion may be, I am tied down in this matter. I cannot vote against my own people, especially when I am told that owing to the persecution abroad they come here to try and regain their self-respect, and to develop into worthy British subjects."

"And what is your private opinion?"

"That when they do develop into worthy British subjects, the result is satisfactory, but when they persist in being clannish and in refusing to conform to the exigencies of modern civilisation, they are a clog on the wheel of national progress. I do not consider it politic on the part of our country to continue to receive them in such great numbers. The consequence you have just seen."

Patricia was silent for a moment, but she was not yet satisfied.

"Why do the employers prefer to engage foreigners to work for them?" she asked, after a short pause.

"Because the pauper aliens require less wages. They are so anxious to get work of some kind that they will accept the lowest wage possible; and they can live on next to nothing. Then when they have learnt their respective trades, they become sweaters on their own account. The whole system is most deplorable."

"And the legitimate British workman goes to the wall?"

"Yes."

"It is a great shame." Her eyes flashed with indignation. "And yet where would the poor Jews go if they are expelled from the Continent and we forbid them to come here? They must go somewhere."

"Ah, that is the great question." He sighed. "If America closes her doors to them as South Africa has done, there seems to be only Australia left, and in Australia their company will be as little desired as it is here."

"It reminds me of the Wandering Jew—the one who insulted the Christ when He was on the way to His crucifixion, and was condemned to live and wander through the ages until the Day of Judgment," the girl said musingly. "Only in this case the wandering Jew has been multiplied into a whole horde of wandering Jews. Do you think there is any truth in the legend, Lionel?"

Her lover smiled.

"I do not know, dear," he replied. "I dare say it is the same as other legends—a tenth part of truth, and nine-tenths superstition."

"Yes, but it is a very fascinating legend. Do you know, Lionel, the condition of the Jews in modern days has always been to me one of the strongest arguments in favour of Christianity. It is such an exact fulfilment of prophecy. I wonder if they will ever fulfil the other part of the prophecy and eventually make Palestine their home?"

"If the Zionists have anything to do with it they will; but it is scarcely likely to happen in our time. What an interest you take in Jewish affairs, Patricia! You might be a Jewess yourself."

The girl smiled, knowing that her interest was only on her lover's account, and that had he not been

a Jew, that interest would never have been aroused. Truth to tell, Mrs. Lowther and Lady Chesterwood were frightfully bored by what they termed Patricia's Jewish hobby. The Countess had forbidden the subject to be mentioned in her presence.

She was there waiting for them when they arrived at Earl Torrens' mansion, and received them with a sigh of relief. Ten minutes of the Earl's society was to her an amplitude, and she had listened to his dissertation on the triumph of colour photography for twenty minutes by the clock. Perhaps the Earl was equally glad to be released from his arduous duty; for he retired as soon as the lovers made their appearance. Lionel, having an appointment elsewhere was obliged to take his departure; so, promising to look in again later, he left the ladies to themselves.

"Mrs. Lowther is out," Patricia remarked, as she took off her things, and rang for her maid. "Will you stay to lunch?"

"I should like to very much. I made up my mind to do so directly your respected father informed me that the she-dragon was off duty. I really cannot understand how you can tolerate her, Pat."

"Mrs. Lowther? Oh, she is a well-meaning soul; a little trying sometimes, I must admit, but I do not see much of her just now. I go out a great deal, you know. Lionel is a most attentive lover."

"But I thought you told me you were obliged to be very quiet on account of his mourning?"

"Yes; we do not attend any society functions unless they are political; but we go for long walks and drives together, and we spend a good deal of our time with Lady Montella, who is one of the sweetest women in the world."

The Countess regarded her contemplatively.

"So you are in love, and flourishing," she observed, with a smile. "Well, I am very glad. Long may it last. Presently I may tell you my news; but it is such a great secret that I hardly know if I am justified in trusting you."

Patricia looked up with curiosity.

"Which means that you will tell me, nevertheless," she rejoined. "What is it, Mamie? Something new?"

The little Countess nodded.

"Something very new; but I am not going to divulge until after lunch. I am too hungry to talk secrets."

Lunch was a somewhat dreary affair. The Earl seemed to consider it his duty to lead the conversation; and as he was a peculiarly absent-minded man, his efforts were not entirely successful. The Countess, having started her host on the subject of one of his hobbies, confined her attention to her favourite mayonnaise, whilst Patricia, like a dutiful daughter, supplemented her father's disquisitions by the most intelligent questions she could muster. When it was over, the ladies adjourned to Patricia's boudoir, which was the cosiest room in the house. It was decorated in the style of the Renaissance, and the few pictures on the walls were of the choicest. Patricia loved to surround herself with pretty things but she also possessed a leaning towards the antique. There was on her little table—itself of ancient origin—a gold snuff-box, which belonged originally to George I.; an old Roman coin, said to be one of the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas Iscariot sold our Lord; the quill pen with which the sentence of

Lady Jane Grey was signed; and various other articles of vertu. There was also a small oaken prie-dieu, with the inscription which St. Paul found at Athens displayed above it: "*To the Unknown God*"; and there was an exquisite marble bust of the late Countess Torrens, Patricia's mother. There were *editions de luxe* of the works of Patricia's favourite poets, and as many photographs of the said poets as could be obtained. In the bow window, which overlooked the square, an old-fashioned harpsichord was placed; here Lady Chesterwood seated herself, and began to play.

The tone of the instrument was mellow, but the fingers of the Countess were stiff. Pianoforte-playing had quite gone out of fashion, for the mechanisms for automatic pianoforte-playing—by means of an attachment to the instrument—were so perfect and in such general use that it was really a waste of energy for a person to manipulate the keys in the old way. This ancient harpsichord, however, was spared the indignity of a mechanical addition. Patricia was too deeply imbued with the sense of the fitness of things to have allowed it, even had it been possible.

"Have you given up wearing a brooch, or have you lost it, Pat?" Lady Chesterwood asked suddenly. She was watching her all the time she played.

Patricia involuntarily put up her hand to her collar.

"Neither," she answered promptly. "I have given it away."

"Given it away? You foolish girl!" The Countess ceased playing, whilst a look of astonishment crossed her face. "You don't mean to say it was the diamond spray you always wear?"

"Yes; the one father gave me after I was ill two years ago. I gave it to the Unemployed."

"Patricia! Are you mad? Please explain yourself."

Patricia blushed. "There is not much to explain," she rejoined. "Lionel and I happened to come across the procession of the Unemployed—perhaps you have seen it yourself? Yes? Then you know how it makes one's blood run cold to see the misery on their faces. I had only a little money to put in the collecting-box, so I gave my brooch. If they can sell it, it will do them more good than myself."

"Preposterous!" the Countess exclaimed. "Why, it was worth at least two hundred pounds."

"So much the better; even if they get only a hundred, it will go towards buying bread. And I shall not even miss it—I have so many trinkets."

Her cousin shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, I won't say any more," she said. "You always were one of the most absurdly quixotic creatures of my acquaintance. I should not be at all surprised if you ended by beggaring yourself."

"In that case, I shall appeal to you for assistance," Patricia answered, with a smile. "But do not let us talk about myself. Tell me your great secret, Mamie."

"Presently. There is plenty of time."

Patricia glanced at her with curiosity.

"You are making a great mystery of it," she remarked. "Whom does it concern?"

Lady Chesterwood's fingers pressed the keys once more. There was a peculiar expression on her face, and a new gleam seemed to come into her eyes. She was a pretty woman, and possessed the indefinable

charm which generally associates itself with young widows. She turned round slowly on the music stool, and faced Patricia with a glance which almost betrayed a touch of defiance.

"The secret concerns myself and a man," she replied slowly. "A great man."

CHAPTER VIII

LADY CHESTERWOOD'S SECRET

PATRICIA'S interest deepened. "A great man?" she repeated. "In what way is he great?"

The Countess rose with an air of mystery, and closed the door, which had been left ajar. Then she established herself comfortably in one of the beautifully carved chairs, and assumed a look of importance.

"First of all, dear," she said impressively, "you must promise absolute secrecy. I must have your word of honour that you won't tell a living soul, not even Lionel Montella."

"I will readily promise not to tell any of my friends," Patricia answered, "but I have no secrets from Lionel. Is this necessary?"

"Absolutely. I would not have Montella know for worlds. Perhaps I am foolish in telling you, Pat, but I know I can trust you if you promise."

The girl hesitated. She was not sure that she cared to be told anything which must be expressly kept back from her lover; but after a few moments' consideration she yielded. After all, it might not be of much importance—a love-affair probably, for the Countess was still quite young.

"Very well, I promise," she said.

"On your word of honour?"

"On my word of honour."

Lady Chesterwood's expression was inscrutable.

"Then I will tell you," she said, after a moment's pause. "I have received an offer of marriage from Mr. Athelstan Moore."

Had she received an offer of marriage from his Satanic Majesty, her cousin could not have looked more aghast. She started to her feet, the colour ebbing from her cheeks.

"From Athelstan Moore?" she repeated, in a voice of excitement. "But surely you will not accept it? You cannot accept it!"

The Countess clasped her hands at the back of her head, and regarded her cousin imperturbably.

"Why not?" she asked, with irritating calmness. "I am only twenty-six, and tired of my widowhood. There is no earthly reason why I should not marry again. What could be more satisfactory than a widow with one little boy marrying a widower with one little girl? And Athelstan Moore is one of the first men in England, and has been angled for by every girl in society since his wife died. I should be very foolish if I did not give his proposal very careful consideration."

Patricia paced the room in agitation.

"I thought you loved my Cousin Chesterwood," she said. "I did not think you would be faithless to his memory so soon."

"You have no right to use the word 'faithless,'" the Countess returned, with a touch of hauteur. "I made Chesterwood a true wife while he lived; I have nothing to reproach myself with where he is concerned. But I have always had the desire for power. I am tired of being a mere society puppet with a

coronet. As wife of the Prime Minister I should shine in a manner after my own heart. There is a certain fascination in helping to pull the wires which govern the State."

"You would help to accomplish the downfall of Lionel Montella's race?" said Patricia, her face hardening. "I had thought our friendship was tried and true, Mamie; but it seems that, like everything else, it is only transient, seeing that you are so willing to relinquish it."

"Nonsense! You are too much given to high-falutin', Pat. Be sensible. Why should the Premier's wife be considered unworthy of your friendship?

"It is not a case of 'unworthiness' at all. The Premier is the enemy of my future husband and of his co-religionists. If you marry him, it is not possible that you can still be my greatest friend. There can be no intercourse between your house and mine. Do you not understand? Mr. Moore would probably forbid you to visit or receive me, and Lionel would have to do the same."

"I do not quite see it," the Countess returned obdurately. "Politics need not interfere with a private and personal friendship. I think you exaggerate the matter, my dear. Why, I might even influence Moore on behalf of Montella's cause. I might be the saviour of Judaism, and receive the thanks of every Jew in the kingdom. Instead of becoming your enemy, I might prove myself in very truth your friend."

Her eyes glistened at the picture her imagination had painted. She would prove what a tremendous influence a woman could have over a man, and how

her feminine will, as frail as gossamer, yet as strong as iron, could decide the destiny of a whole race. Here would be something worth accomplishing, a feat at least worthy of the attempt. To subjugate the invincible will of Athelstan Moore! Her face glowed with a foretaste of the charm of such a battle.

Patricia was doubtful, but her features relaxed. She wondered if the Countess, whose nature she had always considered somewhat shallow, would have the strength of purpose to fulfil her words. If she could succeed, what a glorious victory it would be! The thought caused her heart to leap and her eyes to deepen. She paused in front of her dead cousin's wife, and held out her hands.

"Would you do this, Mamie?" she asked, in a tense voice. "Would you really espouse our cause? Oh, it would be so grand, so blessed a thing! Read the history of the Jews, and you will see what a long-suffering people they are, surely more sinned against than sinning. It is we who are to blame—we Gentiles, who, in the name of Christianity, have persecuted them throughout the ages, who have inflicted on them the tortures of the Inquisition, who have denied them the rights accorded to other civilised beings. The Jews are the elder brothers of the human race, and to hate them is to hate the God who made them. Long before Greece and Rome held sway over the world, *they* had their kings, warriors, poets, and philosophers. Has there ever been in the world's history a greater king and philosopher than Solomon, a greater warrior than Judas the Maccabee, a greater poet than the Psalmist, a greater athlete than Samson, a greater Christian than Paul the Apostle?—and all these men were Jews. Oh, if you could only make

Athelstan Moore and his followers see the uselessness and iniquity of anti-Semitism, you would do a work which would endear you to the hearts of hundreds! But will you do it? Have you the power to carry out your determination? Have you the moral courage to risk incurring the disapproval of society? It is no trivial matter. Think—think what it means!"

Her hands unclasped and fell to her side; her face was unlifted in appeal. She was evidently actuated by a great sincerity and earnestness; and Lady Chesterwood's playful rejoinder froze on her lips.

"Sweet little enthusiast!" she exclaimed, moved in spite of herself. "Montella is lucky in winning your love. It is your love which casts the roseate hue over the Jewish people, dear, and you see I do not possess the same incentive. Still, I will do my best, and if I marry Athelstan Moore, I promise you that I shall not lack the courage to voice your opinions. I would rather remain your friend than become your enemy, and the idea of thwarting the Premier pleases me mightily. It is like David with his little sling and stone attacking the formidable Goliath, or the tiny mouse gnawing the rope which great men cannot break. The world shall see, as it has seen before, what a beautiful woman can do. Have no fear, my dear child, I know I shall succeed."

Self-assurance had ever been the keynote to the success of Mamie Chesterwood's family. From a mere clerk in an engineering office in Baltimore, with little more than his pride of descent from the Pilgrim Fathers to sustain him, her father had risen to the wealth and power of an American copper king. As

a matter of course, both his daughters had married titles, Mamie's elder sister, Olive, being the wife of Prince Charles of Felsen-Schvoenig. It was no wonder, therefore, that Mamie herself had inherited a love of overcoming difficulties, and of mounting from one high position to another. She knew that by marrying Athelstan Moore she would partially lose her freedom ; but she felt that this would amply be compensated for by the exciting situations which would probably affect her as Premier's wife. So by the time her conversation with Patricia came to an end, she had made up her mind to accept the offer of her would-be swain. She asked her cousin for pen and paper, and wrote the answer then and there.

There was always a little of her own notepaper in Patricia's desk, so that she did not have to use Earl Torrens' address. Patricia watched her as she wrote, and wondered what the ultimate result would be. Was the Countess unconsciously making trouble for herself, or was she really paving the way of freedom for the British Jews? Who could look into the future, and foresee the consequence of her act? Only time would show.

"May I not tell Lionel?" the girl asked eagerly, when the letter was sealed. "Why should he be kept in ignorance of the matter? He may be able to offer some advice?"

The Countess shook her head.

"For the present I do not wish him to know," she rejoined. "I must hold you to your promise, Pat. Remember, you gave me your word of honour. Soon it will be in all the society papers. You will not have to wait long."

Patricia said no more; and soon afterwards the

Countess took her departure. When she had gone, the girl remained long in her boudoir, deep in thought. Was it Providence, or merely the irony of fate, that caused her greatest friend to become the wife of her greatest enemy, she wondered. If only she might talk it over with her lover when he came; but she was bound to silence. The fire burned low, and as the shadows gathered, a shadow seemed to oppress her heart. Presently a footman brought her some tea, and tried to make the room more cosy by stirring the fire and drawing the velvet curtains together. Certainly the electric lamps, under their golden shades, conduced to cheerfulness more than the grey twilight. But the sense of loneliness was not dispelled, and crept closer as the hours lengthened. At six o'clock Mrs. Lowther returned, and expounded on all the events of the day; but her companionship was not of the kind that the girl needed, and she was glad when it was time to dress. Her lover did not arrive until much later—just when she had given him up, and was contemplating bed. He had come straight from the House, and burst into the room with an impetuosity she had never seen in him before. His face was so pale, and his eyes so bright, that instinctively she knew that something was wrong. Being aware of the presence of her chaperon, he said not a word, but took both her hands in silence.

Mrs. Lowther, with unusual tact, gathered up her belongings, and uttering a trivial excuse, sailed majestically out of the room. Patricia gave a sigh of relief, but she was in a flutter of suspense.

"Your hands are as cold as ice, dear," she said, with concern. "What has happened?"

"The very worst!" was his reply, in a voice which was hoarse with emotion—"worse than anything I had anticipated even in my wildest dreams. Athelstan Moore has declared open antagonism towards my people. To-night a Bill came up for its first reading in Parliament—a Bill for the banishment of all the Jews!"

"All the Jews?" the girl repeated questioningly. "The pauper aliens, you mean?"

He shook his head.

"No, *all* the Jews, both English and foreign, rich and poor. Moore does not intend to do things by halves."

Patricia drew a deep breath.

"Preposterous!" she exclaimed—"preposterous! Surely the man must be mad. Banish the Jews! Why, anyone can see at first sight that the idea is totally impracticable. How was it received?"

He sank on to a chair, looking almost exhausted.

"I hardly know. I was so dumfounded that I could scarcely move, and the whole place seemed to spin. The other Members regarded it with equanimity, and evidently knew something of it before. I suppose I was purposely kept in the dark. The House rose before the debate was concluded, and it will be brought on again to-morrow night. But think, Patricia, what it will mean. It is enough to make a man's senses reel!"

The girl poured him out a glass of wine and made him take it. If only she had known of this before Lady Chesterwood had left! Her heart beat like a sledge-hammer against her breast, and for the moment she could find no words; but she knew that her lover needed comfort, and that it was her duty to help him.

"Your nerves are unstrung, dear," she said, in a soothing voice. "You must go home soon and rest. I am sure you need not be alarmed, Lionel. The Bill will never be carried; it cannot, while there is justice in England. What man in his senses would counsel intoleration in these days? This is the age of freedom—of freedom in religious matters most of all."

"It is not the Jewish religion that Moore objects to so much as the Jewish race," Montella replied, in a dull voice. "He is as rabid as it is possible for a Jew-baiter to be, and he has, unfortunately, such a convincing manner that there are few who can withstand him. Of course, he made a great deal of the Consolidated Trust smash and those processions of the Unemployed. Yet, as you say, the Bill is impracticable. I do not see how it is possible to banish the Jews. Where are they to go? The whole thing is monstrous—absurd!"

"It is, and therefore you must not worry about it, Lal. You must laugh at it instead. The good-natured British Public will laugh, I am sure, when they read of it in the papers to-morrow. And now, dear, I am not going to talk to you any more to-night. You must go straight home to bed, and try to cool that burning forehead of yours."

He rose and drew her affectionately towards him.

"My darling! You are brave enough to put courage into any man." He sighed, and squaring his shoulders, added: "Well, if it's fighting they want, we must fight to the death. But, Patricia, if by any horrible chance this Bill is passed, it will mean that I also am included under the ban. It will mean the emptying out of joy from my life—for it will mean separation from you."

"Never!" she exclaimed, almost before the words had passed his lips. "Your cause is mine, and not all the devilish designs of Athelstan Moore and his satellites shall come between us. If you are banished, then I shall be banished, too. Oh, Lionel, what is love worth if it fails at such a time!"

She hid her face on his shoulder, her form shaken with heavy sobs; but she quickly recovered from her emotion, and regained her self-possession.

"Mamie Chesterwood was here to-day," she informed him, as he went towards the door. "She is our friend, Lionel, and has promised to stand by us through thick and thin."

"Has she, dear?" There was little hope in his voice. He did not seem to think the Countess would prove an ally of much importance.

"There is more in her than we think," Patricia added, more cheerfully. "I really believe she will be of use. She is one of those who have to be fully persuaded in their own minds before they will do anything."

Then she remembered that her lips were sealed.

CHAPTER IX

THE ZIONISTS

MONTELLA did not go straight home in spite of Patricia's injunction. He turned into the park, and crossed over to the Serpentine, scarcely knowing whither his steps were tending. A slight mist hung over the water, and the air was chilly with the raw dampness of November. With no sound to break the stillness, save the echo of his own tread and the rumble of far-off traffic, he was able to steady his nerves. Moore's Bill had given him a blow from which he could not easily recover; but on due consideration he came to the conclusion that he had been unwise to have so openly displayed his agitation. What he needed were coolness and confidence; but instead of showing either he had become as panic-stricken as an animal driven to bay.

He flung himself down on a seat, with his back to the water, and tried to think out his speech for the morrow. He knew that as the only Jewish member of any importance in the House, his co-religionists would look to him to vindicate their claims. On him had fallen the responsibility of voicing the appeal for justice of the whole Jewish community, and although he was but a unit when it came to taking the majority, it was his duty to oppose the Bill tooth and nail.

The absurdity of the Bill would have caused him

amusement had it not affected him so nearly; for he could see that endless complications would arise if it were passed. The banishment of the Jews was a matter easier said than done, seeing that the yellow badge and the *rouelle* were things of the past. Well, it would be a fine test for separating true Jews from false: perhaps persecution would—as it had so often done before—kindle the smouldering fire of Judaism into a flame.

The newspapers next morning were full of the new Bill, and despite the fact that many of the newspaper proprietors were of Hebrew extraction, the attitude taken up by the majority of the dailies was in favour of the project. Instead of displaying the sense of justice and fairplay which has ever been the Englishman's boast, the leaders were characterised by envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. The jealousy which had been kept under for so long a time now burst forth with uncontrollable fury; to Montella, it was but the impotent howling of a totally corrupt press.

His speech that night had nothing of the brilliance of the Premier's oration, but it was manly and straight to the point. Like a second Daniel come to judgment, he stood erect and fearless; and stated his case with a lucidity which was bound to create a good impression. While admitting the undesirability of pauper alien immigration, he considered it the height of folly to desire to interfere with the peace of those estimable Jewish citizens who kept the laws and contributed to the welfare of the country. He asked his colleagues to look back to the reign of Queen Victoria—the reign which brought so much emancipation to the Jews—to note the friendliness with

which she always treated them, and the consequent prosperity of England during her reign. He begged them not to allow the beneficent influence of Victoria the Good to be dispelled; and appealing to their common sense as well as their humanity, endeavoured to point out the disadvantages appertaining to such a Bill. He certainly had logic on his side, as well as the certainty that his cause was a just one; and his words, uttered in a low but distinct tone, commanded respect. The calmness with which he spoke contrasted favourably with the lashing words of the Premier, whose eyes gleamed with a personal hatred as well as an impersonal conviction. But despite the justice of Montella's plea, the general feeling was against the Jews; and as the whole of the working-classes supported the Bill, there was little doubt as to its final issue.

"It is madness!" Montella exclaimed, when he told his mother and Raie of the result. "The people are all afflicted with Judaphobia; their reasoning powers are numbed. They will not be satisfied until they have broken up our homes and driven us away."

"And is there no antidote?" asked Raie wistfully. "Cannot we come to a compromise of some sort?"

"There is the only one which Mr. Lawson Holmes suggested in the House this afternoon—assimilation. We are to sink our racial affinity, one towards another; give up our Judaism for Theism; attend Theistic places of worship, if worship in public we must; pull down our synagogues and burn our *talithim;* abstain from clannishness; marry only Gentiles; and forget our descent. That, says Mr. Holmes, is the rational solution of the whole question. Assimilation is the means by which we are to wriggle

out of the difficulty. Of course, it applies only to us British Jews."

"No doubt there are many who will think that a very sensible course," said Lady Montella. "Still I am surprised that if the racial prejudice is really so strong the Gentiles should desire the admixture with English blood. Ah—" as a maid approached bearing a card on a silver salver, "someone to see you, I suppose."

"Dr. Engelmacher!" exclaimed Lionel, with pleasure, as he took up the card. "I had no idea that he was in London. Show him in here please, Mary."

"Dr. Engelmacher!" repeated Lady Montella, her eyes brightening at the name. "He must have come here for some special purpose."

Max Engelmacher was the great leader of the Zionists in Germany, a man whose fame had spread throughout every Jewish centre. In appearance he was a typical German, with fair hair, light blue eyes covered with spectacles, and rugged features. No less Oriental-looking man could ever have been found; nevertheless, he was a very Jew of the Jews—to some a second Moses ready to lead his people to the promised land, to others the one who should come in the power and spirit of Elijah before the advent of the national Messiah. As a young man he—in common with others—had seen his visions and dreamed his dreams; but experience had hardened him into a genial cynic who was practical before everything else.

Lady Montella rose as his burly figure blocked the doorway, and held out her hand with almost the first smile which had passed across her face since her

husband's death. There was no doubt as to the sincerity of her welcome.

"This bad business has had one good effect, since it has brought you here," she said.

"A bad business indeed, lady," he replied, in German. "Yet if it stirs up some of you English Jews to action, I shall not call it altogether bad."

"You think we are too cold, eh, doctor?"

"Cold? *Um Gotteswillen!* yes. You sit at home in your fine houses, with your maids and footmen, your electric light and your telephone, and you will scarcely spare a *nebbich*[1] for those of your own race who are hounded from one place to another, who are scarcely allowed to take a free breath of God's air because they are Jews. You metaphorically gather your skirts together lest you should be defiled by contact with those whom you choose to call the scum of the earth; but you do not take the trouble to consider what has brought them so low. And you tie up your heart-strings and your purse-strings tight, lest you should be tempted to throw good money away. Cold! You are a nation of icebergs, so civilised and anglicised that what feeling you ever possessed has been refined out of you long ago. That is my opinion of the English Jews, madam. I am bound to speak the truth."

"Dear old Engelmacher!" exclaimed Montella, *sotto voce*. "A voice of thunder, and a heart of gold!"

Then he turned to the mighty pioneer, and entered upon a serious conversation concerning the present crisis. It was a relief to him to be able to open his heart.

[1] "Poor things!"

The doctor, having obtained permission, lit up his old and well-beloved briar, and puffed away in silence. He always believed that his pipe assisted his mental digestion, and never troubling to study conventionalities, was not deterred by the presence of the ladies. Lady Montella was too much interested in the discussion to mind the smoke. She considered this an opportunity which should certainly not be lost.

"It is money we want," the doctor said, when the whole situation had been explained. "Another two millions, and Palestine will be ours. I have the best authority for saying this; our colleague Karl Lierhammer had an audience with the Sultan last week. Only one hundred thousand pounds is needed to allow us to start operations north-west of the Jordan at once, and I can lay my hands on fifty thousand Jewish artisans who are ready to begin. So you see our dream is not so far from being realised after all."

Lady Montella's face glowed.

"How splendidly you have worked while we thought the movement was at a standstill," she said. "You may count on us for the hundred thousand; we will raise it among ourselves and our relations. We can safely promise this, I think?" she added, addressing her son.

Lionel answered in the affirmative.

"We do not require the money as a donation," Dr. Engelmacher explained. "It will all go into the national debt. Palestine will be a self-supporting country in a comparatively short time; the fertility of the land is remarkable. Will you believe me, dear people, when I tell you that before the Zionist

movement was conceived, that country was barren from lack of water; but that since we began our operations there the rain has fallen in due season, and all Nature has conduced to further our aim?[1] Is not this a testimony—if such we need—to the righteousness of our cause?"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Lady Montella, with glad surprise. "Yet people say that miracles do not happen nowadays. Why, even Christians believe that we are to be restored to our own land—the land of promise. Strange that some of the Jews themselves should be so reluctant to act on that belief."

"Strange indeed," returned the doctor. "I believe that prosperity and freedom have combined to dim their spiritual vision. They live only for the present, and being happy themselves, they are incapable of feeling for their persecuted brethren abroad. Ah, if I can only succeed in arousing the interest of all the rich Jews in England so far as to make them invest their money Zionwards, our cause will be won. It is for this purpose that I have come here."

"If England expels the Jews, I'm afraid she will regret it before many months are past," said Montella thoughtfully. "I believe the Government will not have the best side of the bargain after all."

"The Government will find itself in the biggest pickle it has ever known," was Dr. Engelmacher's reply. "It is safe to say that when anti-Semitism attacks a country, that country is in a state of decline. England, the justice-loving happy queen of nations, will soon find out her mistake. She is but passing through a phase; she will come through the cloud

[1] A fact attested by the Rev. Dr. Gaster.

strengthened and purified. I know and love the English people well enough to be certain of this."

"Then you think—?"

"I think nothing yet, my dear Montella. I prefer to wait for the course of events. For the present I must say *Auf Wiedersehen.* I shall see you again before I leave London, I hope."

He rose, and politely declining Lady Montella's cordial invitation to dinner, took his departure; but they saw him again at a huge Zionist meeting on the following night. The hall was packed from door to door, rich and poor uniting for once under the sense of common danger. Like a drowning man catches at a straw, they clung to the new hope which was presented to them; for with anti-Semitism brought so near home, they could no longer afford to ignore the burning question. And what a hope it was that, clothed though it was in foreign accents, breathed through Engelmacher's words! A land of their very own, where persecution would be forgotten, where they could lift their heads in freedom, and win back their good name. The promised land of their forefathers and of their glorious past—the promised land of the future, where they should behold the long-looked-for coming of the King! No wonder that their stricken hearts were inflamed by the national hope. The voices of the prophets—to which for so long they had turned deaf ears—were reaching them at last.

Who could tell what new revelations they might not have to unfold?

CHAPTER X

PREMIER AND PEERESS

THE new Grand Imperial Hotel at Brighton was very full; for it had become the fashion once again to spend the week-end away from town, and the Grand Imperial was the hotel temporarily favoured, not so much by the so-called "smart set" as by those who were popularly supposed to possess brains. Jaded barristers, glad to forget for the moment that there existed such a place as the Inner Temple, a trio of actor-managers who were "resting"; two or three of the most beautiful women in society, and a sprinkling of clerics were included among the guests. To-night—Saturday—the Right Hon. Athelstan Moore was expected, and the hotel complement would be complete.

It was the hour between tea and dinner—the children's hour. Those who were not imbibing the salubrious air along the promenade were gathered in the lounge, whilst the children—there were not many—played hide-and-seek around the Corinthian pillars and behind the numerous Chesterfield couches. One of them, a tiny boy of scarcely five summers, was playing horses with a little girl three years his senior, and racing up and down as fast as his little legs would carry him, seemed bubbling over with health and merriment.

"You go too slow, Phyllis," he piped, almost out of breath with his mimic galloping and plunging. "Why don't you run?"

Phyllis Moore loosened the reins.

"If I run I shall make myself tired," she replied demurely. "My governess told me to play quietly. I am going to wait up for father to-night."

The air of maiden superiority jarred upon the little boy.

"I will wait up for father, too," he announced sturdily. "Let's both wait up."

Phyllis looked more superior than ever.

"You are very silly, Leslie," she returned. "How can you wait up for your father when he is dead?"

"What's dead?" demanded Leslie, with wide-open eyes.

"Dead? Oh, it's being put down in a hole in the ground and being covered with a lot of nasty earth, and then having a great flat stone plumped down on top of you. That's what your father is."

"He isn't," denied Leslie, with indignation.

"He is, or else you would not be the Earl of Chesterwood."

"He isn't!" Leslie stamped his foot.

"He is!"

"He isn't. You are a horrid little girl, and I don't like you a bit."

"Children, what are you quarrelling about?" said a lady's voice from behind one of the pillars. "It is very naughty to quarrel. Come and tell me what is the matter."

Leslie dissolved into tears, and hid his face in the folds of his mother's skirt, whilst Phyllis stood by abashed. Lady Chesterwood, not wishing to have

her gown marred by her son's emotion, produced a small cambric handkerchief, and placed it between the child's face and her skirt.

"Now," she said, addressing herself to Phyllis, "why did you make Leslie cry?"

"I didn't make him cry," the Premier's daughter answered sulkily. "I only told him his father was dead. It is quite true. His father *is* dead."

"He isn't," came from Leslie, in a stifled voice. "She says my father is in a hole in the ground, with a lot of nasty earth and a stone on top of him; and he isn't! My father doesn't live in a hole."

The Countess maintained a calm demeanour.

"Your father is above the bright blue sky with the angels, sonnie," she said soothingly. "Don't you remember that I told you he had gone away to heaven?"

"Yes." Leslie raised his head triumphantly, and glowered at Phyllis. "My father is in heaven with the angels. I knew he wasn't down a nasty hole in the ground!"

Phyllis, still unconvinced, stalked away to rejoin her governess, and the Countess was spared the necessity of entering further into the problem. She wondered what Leslie would have to say if she were to provide him with a new father, and how he and Phyllis would agree. The letter which she had dashed off in Patricia's boudoir had never been sent, for she had thought better of it before she reached home. She had not yet given a definite answer to her illustrious wooer, although a month had passed, but she knew that he was coming to Brighton expressly to hear what she had to say.

When the nurse came for her boy, she went to

rejoin the sister with whom she was staying—the Princess Charles von Felsen-Schvoenig. She felt unusually nervous, and could not settle down anywhere. The bravado she had shown in her conversation with Patricia had gradually evaporated until there was little left. The nearer it came to meeting the Premier the less courageous did she feel. She was not at all sure now that she considered it worth while to become the defender of the Jews.

The Princess was very much like her sister in appearance, but possessed stronger features and a firmer will. She considered Mamie foolish to wish to encumber herself with another husband, and to give up her widowed freedom. Her own husband—with whom she was not in love—was suffering with a disease of the spine ; and as he allowed himself to be relegated to the castle in Felsen-Schvoenig whenever his presence was undesired by his wife, the Princess enjoyed life in her own way as a woman of independence. She was fond of travelling, and journeyed from one place to another as she felt inclined. Perhaps there was scarcely a wife in the whole of Europe so little troubled by domestic affairs.

"So the hour approaches!" she exclaimed, as her sister appeared in her boudoir. "Whence the pale cheeks and troubled brow?"

"Am I pale?" The Countess glanced at herself in the mirror. "I shall have plenty of colour when the lights are lit. I feel real stupid to-day; I don't know why. When Moore begins rolling off his words to me in that curious manner of his, I know I shall have nothing to say for myself in return. I might be a girl in her first season instead of a widow and a woman of the world. And I just wanted to

be especially brilliant to-night. It's very annoying, isn't it?"

The Princess regarded her contemplatively. "I believe you are afraid of Moore," she said.

"Afraid? What nonsense. As if I could be frightened of a little man scarcely a head taller than myself!"

"A little man certainly, but he has a great personality. It is said that the man or woman does not exist who can oppose Moore's iron will. It is true enough that when he determines on a thing, that thing always comes to pass. Therefore, my dear Mamie, you will know what to expect."

"*Qui vivra verra*," returned her sister, as the dressing-bell resounded through the hotel; and then, with a careless nod, she left the room.

She looked much better when, an hour later, she descended to the salon. Her gown of filmy chiffon and lace suited her to perfection, and anticipation had lent a touch of colour to her cheeks. The Princess, who was in black relieved and studded by gems which glittered with every ray of light, glanced at her with satisfaction.

"Moore is here," she announced quietly. "He arrived about ten minutes ago, and has gone up to see Phyllis and dress."

Nevertheless the Premier was absent from the dinner-table, and the Countess was kept on tenter-hooks until the gentlemen rejoined the ladies, when she noticed his short, thick-set figure at the entrance to the lounge. The band in the north gallery had begun the overture to Faust, and his coming was—by a coincidence—heralded by the martial tones of the Soldiers' Chorus. She put down the untasted

cup of coffee on the little table at her side, and trifled nervously with the diamond collar on her neck. The next moment she had shaken hands and was exchanging commonplaces with the first man in England. Her nervousness suddenly vanished, leaving her natural and free.

The Press had often remarked on the apparent likeness between the Premier and Napoleon the Great. Certainly Athelstan Moore possessed eagle-eyes, a Roman nose, and somewhat round and stooping shoulders, and the brusqueness of his manner considerably strengthened the effect. He jerked out his words in the tone of one accustomed to command, and was absolutely devoid of the saving sense of humour. That was why some people found his society somewhat trying. He never could—or would—receive a joke.

"You are late," the Countess said, as she made room for him beside her. "I expected you long ago."

"Yes ; I was detained in town. I could have been down to dinner, however, had not Phyllis insisted on my staying with her until she went to sleep."

It was a curious fact that while the Premier never suffered himself to be dictated to by those whose powers of thought equalled his own, he was as wax in the hands of his child. The Countess smiled.

"Phyllis has been quarrelling with my little Leslie," she informed him, with pretended gravity. "It is strange that they two can never agree."

"I suppose it is because the girl is older than the boy," he returned thoughtfully. "A boy does not like to be commanded by a girl, even if she be older than himself. I must have a serious talk with

Phyllis. I do not wish her to quarrel with anyone, least of all your little boy."

He laid stress on the pronoun. The Countess knew what he meant, but she said nothing, and turned over the pages of her book with apparent carelessness. The lounge was filling, and the music ceased. Espying the figure of a well-known political bore opposite, Moore leant farther back in shadow. He knew that if he were noticed he would be called upon to talk politics for the remainder of the evening; and although it was true that his life was bound up in his beloved Government, he was not anxious to enter into a controversy just now.

"I wish to speak to you, Mamie," he said, lowering his voice. "Will you come out on the terrace? It is a glorious night; and if you put on a wrap you will not feel cold."

The Countess rose obediently, and sent for her fur-lined cloak. It was just like a man to think that a bare neck and arms could be sufficiently protected by a flimsy "wrap." The night was certainly calm, but as it was winter it could scarcely be otherwise than chilly. The terrace was deserted, save for a young man who was enjoying a smoke at the far end. Moore drew the young widow to a rustic seat at the most sheltered corner. There was no sound save the swish of the sea.

Athelstan Moore was not the man to indulge in sentimentality. He paid no heed to the moon and the stars and the stillness, but came to the point at once. Lady Chesterwood had been given a month to consider his offer of marriage, and as the time had expired, he awaited her answer now.

Lady Chesterwood was still undecided.

"You say you wish to marry me because you are particularly drawn towards me," she said evenly. "But in your position as head of the State, is it wise to saddle yourself with a wife?"

"'*Amare simul et sapere ipsi jovi non datur*,'" he quoted lightly. "Besides, I think it expedient for a Prime Minister to be married, since his wife can perform her duty to the State socially as hostess. Mrs. Moore, as you know, died a year after our marriage—when Phyllis was born. Don't you think I owe a duty also to my motherless child?"

If there was a tender spot in the Premier's heart, it was for his little girl. Mamie knew it, and thought she recognised what had prompted the man's desire.

"You want a mother for Phyllis?" she asked softly. "Am I not right?"

"Yes; but I also want you for myself. It is not good for man to be alone, especially a man so harassed and worried by the affairs of the nation as I am. When a fellow's brain is so severely taxed that sometimes the whole universe seems out of joint, he longs for the sympathy of an intelligent woman to steady his nerves. I am not a young man, and I do not offer you the passionate devotion which a hot-headed youth lavishes on a young girl in her teens; but I will do my best to make you a good husband, Mamie; and as you are a sensible woman, I think you will understand."

Mamie did understand, and experienced a feeling of gratification. It seemed strange to hear Moore——the ostensibly stony-hearted, hard-headed Prime Minister—talk in this strain. It showed that, strong as he was, he was not too strong to be able to

dispense with sympathy. It showed that, in spite of all the logic of dry-as-dust professors, there was a force to be reckoned with in love.

The music had begun again, and the seductive strains of a valse floated out towards them. The waves, as they broke at regular intervals upon the beach, seemed to beat time to the melody, and the seething foam rushing backwards on the pebbles added a refrain. A sense of unreality affected the little Countess as she listened ; it seemed almost as if she were living the past over again. She had had acquaintance with the man beside her for at least three years, but she had never liked him so well as at this moment. Perhaps it was because she saw him in a new light, and felt the undoubted fascination of his virile personality. She forgot the many stories she had heard of his despotic dealings, forgot altogether his hatred of the Jews. She remembered only that he was a great man, and that he had come to *her* for sympathy. Was it a wonder that her small features glowed with pride !

" I will marry you because you want me," she said, in a gentle voice at last, " and I will try and do my duty to your motherless girl, as I hope you will to my fatherless boy. But you will be good to me, won't you, Athelstan ? " she added, almost wistfully. " You will be our protector—Leslie's and mine ? "

He raised her hand to his lips.

" It will be my first care to protect you," he replied, well pleased, although he had known all along that she would consent. And he decided that the marriage should take place in six weeks' time ; there was no occasion for a further delay.

It was getting cold, and Mamie suggested an

adjournment within. They re-passed the young man on their way, still unconcernedly smoking his cigar. The Princess watched their return, but failed to deduce from their manner what had happened. Before retiring to rest, however, she presented herself in her sister's apartment. She was curious to know the result.

Mamie was sitting in front of her dressing-table shedding tears—though whether of joy or sadness she did not herself know. She felt as though she had just come through an ordeal, which, paradoxically, had not been an ordeal after all. She dried her eyes hastily, declaring that she was a goose; to which statement her sister unhesitatingly agreed.

Mamie pushed back her chair, and regarded her with an unnecessary expression of defiance.

"Well, it's all settled," she said carelessly. "I am just going to write to Poppa. We shall be married on the 10th of February if the fates propend."

The Princess gave her a sisterly kiss.

"I suppose you know your own business best, so I will congratulate you," she remarked. "Did you keep your promise to Patricia and impose some condition about the Jews?"

Mamie shook her head.

"It would not have been wise to ruffle Athelstan's feelings just then by talking about the Jews," was her reply. "To tell you the truth, I entirely forgot their existence. However, there is time yet. I will introduce the subject to-morrow."

She was not over-anxious to show the red rag to the bull.

CHAPTER XI

THE PREMIER OUTWITTED

THE next day Lady Chesterwood sat down and wrote the following letter to her husband's cousin :

" MY DEAR PATRICIA,—I have just been up Queen's Road to see Athelstan off by the 6.40 to town, but he will be here again in the middle of the week (Parliament permitting), so the parting will not be for long. Not forgetting my promise to you, I had a long conversation with him this afternoon on the Jewish question, and as you know his feelings on the matter, I think I was *most courageous* in introducing the subject at all. He says that the affair has now passed out of his hands, and that in speaking as he did, he merely voiced the opinion of the great bulk of the British workmen. That the Bill will be passed is an absolute certainty, and he thinks the Edict of Banishment will be proclaimed in about a month from now. I then told him about your engagement to Mr. Montella, and he said it was *absolutely suicidal* on your part to become the wife of a Jew. He was so angry about it that I dared not say a word in defence. He has begged me to do my utmost to persuade you to break off the engagement; and really, Patricia, I think you will be *most foolish* if you persist. Have you not realised that, as the wife

of Montella, you will either be banned and cut in society, or else you will have to be separated from him when the new Act comes into force? I don't know what your father can be about that he does not interfere. Athelstan intends to pay him a visit during the course of the week, to acquaint him of his duty. Don't think me unkind for taking this view of the matter. What I really desire is your *ultimate* happiness.—Ever your affectionate cousin,

"MAMIE CHESTERWOOD."

The caligraphy was somewhat sprawling in effect, and much underlined. A student of graphology would have noticed weakness, and a disposition easily amenable to persuasion in the unconnected and carelessly formed characters. Patricia absorbed the contents of the letter with very little surprise. Knowing how easy it was to influence the Countess in almost any direction, she had been certain all along that the Prime Minister would soon persuade her to his way of thinking. That was why she had been so horror-stricken at Mamie's anticipated engagement to Moore.

The Premier did not pay his visit that week, but he came before the month was out. The Earl received him in the state drawing-room, and listened attentively to what he had to say. He and Moore had been at Balliol together, and although they had never been actual friends, they had always entertained a mutual respect for each other. Therefore he did not think of resenting the Minister's interference in the matter, and went so far as to acknowledge the apparent reasonableness of his opinions.

Nevertheless he did not consider it necessary to

be greatly concerned. If it had been his son who wished to marry a Jewess, the case would have been different; he seemed to think a daughter of much less consequence.

"Patricia is of age and able to decide for herself," he said, with an air of nonchalance. "As she makes her bed, so must she lie upon it—that is all."

"But it is such a disgrace," persisted Moore, determined on carrying his point. "It is a case which will excite public comment, and therefore is not merely a personal matter. For the sake of example it ought not to be allowed."

The Earl's face was impassive.

"What is it you object to?" he asked. "The race or the religion?"

"Both, though if Montella dropped his Judaism it would not be so bad. But Montella never will; the matter will be solved by your daughter joining the Jewish Church. That is where the disgrace comes in—for a woman in these days of grace to voluntarily go back to the religion of the pre-Christian Era, to fling away the Christianity which has done more than anything else to civilise the world. Why, it's absolutely ridiculous. She might just as well put away her modern dress, education, and culture. I have never known such an absurd thing in my life."

"I am afraid my daughter is angry with Christianity just now," said the Earl imperturbably, "since it is used as a cloak to cover the persecution of the Jews. She thinks the end does not justify the means."

"Nonsense! she does not understand anything at all about it. The rulers of the State have to look far ahead; what we legislate now is for the benefit of the future generations. It is surely better that these

people should be expelled than that the whole nation should suffer later on."

He paced up and down the room, his face crimson with indignation. He could have shaken the noble Earl for being so dense as not to see the enormity of the situation. He continued to harangue him for another forty minutes, until the Earl was so weary that he promised faithfully to insist on the dissolution of the betrothal. Then just as he was about to conclude his remarks, the door opened to admit the happy—or unhappy—pair. To the Premier their appearance was most opportune.

They both bowed to the visitor, but neither attempted to shake hands. Patricia, forgetting that he was Mamie Chesterfield's fiancé, saw in him only the virulent Jew-hater, and could not bring herself to give him a friendly greeting, even though at this particular moment she felt at peace with all the world. Montella looked unusually flushed, but the anxious expression which had been his of late had vanished, and there was an eager glow in his eyes. He took not the slightest notice of the Premier's glance of hatred, and stood by his sweetheart's side with an air of self-possession. He knew, without requiring to be told, that the visit of his enemy was in some way connected with himself; but an event had happened which caused him to view this visit with equanimity almost amounting to unconcern.

The day was raw and cold, but Patricia was dressed in the palest shade of grey, the delicate appearance of which was enhanced by the choice white flowers at her breast and attached to her ermine muff. She looked so fair and radiant, that Athelstan Moore's indignation increased, and he determined yet again

that this beautiful girl should not be lost to England and the Church by becoming Montella's bride. He asked for an interview with her and her father, minus the presence of her lover; but to this request the girl refused to accede. She was quite willing to listen to whatever the Premier might wish to say, but it must be said before Mr. Montella or not at all.

The Premier met the steady glance from her grey eyes without flinching.

"Very well, Lady Patricia, you give me no alternative but to speak out my mind before one to whom my words must be extremely disagreeable," he said, with a glance at Montella. "I will not beat about the bush then; I will come to the point at once. I have just had a long conversation with your father, in which I have tried to point out to him the many disadvantages which would accrue from your marriage with Mr. Montella. Not to mention the many minor points which I might put forth for his consideration and yours, I will repeat three great impedimenta to such a marriage. Firstly, you would have to become an apostate from the Christian religion—an action, the gravity of which it is possible you could not realise for many years; secondly, you would be ostracised by society, and for your father's sake you should remember the motto *noblesse oblige*—you are not justified in renouncing your birth-right; and thirdly, you would perform an action contrary to the spirit and temper of the nation at the present time, by not only advocating the Jewish cause, but by becoming the wife of a Jew. These three reasons are surely of sufficient weight to deter you from such a course, especially as you would give not only personal, but national offence. Of course I take it for

granted that you are not actuated purely by a motive of selfishness. I presume that you are not unwilling to weigh the pros and cons of the case?"

Patricia had sunk on to one of the little Chippendale chairs, and was looking up at him with an air of artlessness, whilst the Earl and Montella stood inertly by.

"You are very kind to take so much interest in me, Mr. Moore," she said quietly, when he had finished. "May I be so bold as to inquire the reason?"

"Certainly; the reason is not far to seek. Having the honour and pleasure of your acquaintance, your contemplated marriage would grieve me inexpressibly. And not only that; as I said before, the marriage of a lady of high rank and noble family with a leader of insurgent Jews is a matter of national importance. Your father has agreed with me that such is the case."

At the word "insurgent" Montella started forward as though he wished to speak, but his sweetheart, with a gesture, restrained him.

"The Jews are not insurgents," she corrected quietly. "It is you and your party who are endeavouring to make them so. I think it a pity that the nation has not enough to do to look after its own affairs without troubling about mine. I am afraid I do not appreciate an interest of this sort."

The Premier scowled, and Lord Torrens, noticing it, advanced.

"I wish you to give Mr. Moore a proper answer, my dear child," he said amicably. "Since he has taken the trouble to come here expressly on your account, it is fitting that you should make your defence."

"Defence?" repeated the girl, with rising colour.

"Am I in a court of law?" She gulped down her angry feelings, and added, in a quieter tone: "Very well, Mr. Moore, my defence is simply this: If I am of noble birth, Mr. Montella's lineage is more ancient than my own, and there is no member of my family who has ever done so much to promote the general welfare of his country as did the late Sir Julian Montella for England. Lionel himself is in every way worthy of respect; and the brilliance of his university and parliamentary careers has proved that a more gifted man of his age cannot be found. That he is a Jew is to me an additional attraction, and for the senseless opinions of society at large I care nothing whatever. In regard to the religious point of view, I feel justified in seceding from Christianity if the circumstances necessitate my doing so. Perhaps had I received a more careful religious training, I might not have found it so easy to renounce, but since my mother died I have been left to flounder about in the maze of conflicting and contradictory doctrines; consequently I have nothing to cling to, and no treasured sentiment to forego. Finally, I love Mr. Montella with all my heart, and therefore I am determined to be faithful to my promise."

She gave a sigh of relief as her voice dropped into silence. Her listeners could not help admiring the staunch spirit of her words. Lionel hated to be eulogised, but his heart warmed towards his sweet and zealous advocate. The Premier realised the futility of his intervention, but he was not yet willing to throw up the sponge.

"I see that to discuss the matter with you is useless," he returned, with equanimity. "It is seldom possible to argue with a woman, I find. However, I

now make my appeal to your father. Lord Torrens, you have heard my opinion both as politician and friend, and I hope you now realise the importance and truth of what I have said. It is your duty to prohibit this marriage by every means in your power; but if you do not feel disposed to exert your prerogative, will you accept me as deputy in your place? Do you give me the authority to work for you in this matter? If so, I think I shall be able to find—by means of the law—an impediment which cannot be surmounted. If I undertake to fight out the matter, the marriage *shall not take place!*"

He jerked out the last words as though he were pronouncing final judgment, and brought his fist down on the table with force. The lovers looked at each other, and Montella made as though he would speak; but again Patricia restrained him.

"Father," she said, approaching the Earl, with a look of appeal, "do you not think this interview has lasted long enough? I have listened to Mr. Moore with all the patience I could manage; but when he threatens to prevent my marriage by means of the law, it is like trying to frighten a child. We may not know much—Lionel and I—but we are wise enough to know that the law has no power where we are concerned. Besides, you would not give Mr. Moore permission to act for you in this matter, would you, dear?"

The Earl was getting impatient, and took no notice of her caress.

"I give Mr. Moore permission to do as he likes," he answered, a trifle pettishly. "If the matter is of national importance, it is in his domain, and he can take what steps he chooses. Personally, I like

Montella, and have no objection to him as a son-in-law. You must fight it out between you; I wash my hands of the whole affair."

The two young people looked triumphant, but so did the Premier.

"Then it is unnecessary to prolong this interview further," he said, taking up his hat and stick. "Since you give me authority, Lord Torrens, I shall know what course to pursue."

Montella at last came forward.

"One moment, Mr. Moore, before you go," he put in, drawing his beloved towards him. "Lady Patricia and I have no wish to maintain a personal enmity towards you, and we should like to part as friends. It may be that we shall never cross your path again, for when the barbarous Edict is published, it is probable that we shall leave England for good. Meanwhile, we may assure you that whatever steps you may take to prevent our marriage will be absolutely useless, for the simple reason that—in order to save further controversy on the matter—*we were married this morning*."

He had no occasion to repeat his statement; his words carried conviction with them. The Earl started in surprise, and then gave vent to a chuckle of amusement. The Premier was quite taken aback, but in spite of the sudden pallor which overspread his face, he managed to retain his self-possession.

"Since you have taken the law into your own hands, then there is no more to be said," he returned, in a voice from which all the bombast had departed. "May I ask where the ceremony was performed?"

The bridegroom produced sundry documents from his breast pocket.

"We were married first at the registrar's office at Knightsbridge, then by the Chief Rabbi in my mother's drawing-room. If you wish to see the certificate you are welcome to do so," he said.

The Premier condescended to give the papers his examination. Then he suddenly veered round, and astonished them all by offering his congratulations. The newly-married pair were too happy to bear malice, and accepted them with satisfaction. But they could not help remarking on his sudden change of feeling when the Premier eventually took his leave.

The Earl chuckled for the remainder of the day, and in his admiration for Montella's smartness, forbore to be angry. He considered that the interfering Premier had been nicely fooled, and expressed the hope that the lesson would do him good. Montella wondered what Moore's next move would be; he knew that he was not the man to swallow defeat.

"What a strange wedding-day, dearest!" he exclaimed on the drive towards his mother's flat —their temporary home. "We could not have been married in a quieter manner had we been the poorest couple in England. Why, even our footman had his wedding-breakfast, and a fortnight at Southend; but we have had to dispense both with festivities and honeymoon."

Patricia smiled up at him reassuringly.

"Never mind, Lal, we will make up for it later on," she returned happily. "It is Parliament's fault, and you are still in mourning, you know. There will be plenty of time for our honeymoon when the Edict is proclaimed."

"There will be hardships for us both," he said, with

a sigh, his brow clouding. "I quail when I think of what I have brought upon you, my beloved."

She drove away his forebodings with a gentle caress.

"I can bear all hardships and all troubles," she answered, in an eager voice. "I can undergo anything—so long as I have you!"

CHAPTER XII

MONTELLA'S OLD NURSE

THE Montella-Byrne alliance evoked no little comment in society and the Press, and it was tacitly agreed that Lady Patricia should be socially punished for her offence. Nevertheless, friends sprang up in defence of the newly-married pair from the most unexpected quarters, and Patricia found that she was not to lose all her Christian acquaintance after all. When Parliament adjourned for the Christmas recess, she and her husband travelled to a village near Thorpe Burstall, in the vicinity of which was situated the Montellas' country seat. They arrived there at noon on Christmas Eve, and to their complete surprise, received an ovation at the railway station. The villagers, too loyal to be affected by the anti-Jewish agitation, remembered only the never-failing kindness they had received at the hands of the late Sir Julian Montella, and turned out in full force to welcome his son's bride. Between the station and Burstall Abbey two arches of welcome had been erected, and although the quantity of highly-coloured paper with which they were adorned conduced to a somewhat crude effect, to the happy pair they were not lacking in beauty. When the second was reached, four stalwart men insisted on taking the horses out of the carriage, and themselves dragged

the vehicle to its destination. Surely there could be no greater honour than this!

Amidst the joyous sound of cheering they alighted and entered the house. Montella's heart was so full that he could scarcely find words in which to frame his thanks. The devotion of the people, coming at a time when he had had nothing but unfavourable criticism on all sides, could not fail to touch him deeply. It showed him that the burning fever of anti-Semitism had at least not been permitted to penetrate here, and that it was still possible to show good feeling towards a Jew. He reciprocated by inviting them to dinner in the large hall on New Year's Day, an invitation which, needless to say, was unanimously accepted.

Burstall Abbey—which was built in the Gothic style—had come into the Montellas' possession in 1870. It was a fine old place, and Sir Julian had taken pride in seeing that it was kept in good repair. There had been two chapels attached, the first of which had fallen into decay many years ago. The second had been transformed into a dining-room, and was one of the finest apartments in the house. The altar had long since been done away with, and its place was now occupied by a massive chiffonier; but the oak wainscot and mullioned windows remained, as well as the high-pointed arches and lofty roof.

"What would the old monks say if they could see us enjoying our lunch here?" remarked Patricia laughingly, as she sat down to the table. "They would call us vandals and barbarians, I supppose."

She was so delighted with everything in the place, that Lionel was all the more grieved that the property would so soon pass out of his hands. It

seemed such a great pity to have to give up the Abbey, where both he and his father had been born. There were so many tender memories and associations of his childhood connected with it, that it would be like renouncing part of his own personality. But when the Edict was proclaimed there would be no other alternative; and sell it he must.

"I wish my father would take it over," Patricia said eagerly, when they had discussed the question several times. "We can ask him to hold it in trust for us; some day we may be able to have it back again. Shall I write to him about it, Lionel?"

"If you like, dear; but there is no immediate hurry. You are more hopeful than I am," he added half sorrowfully. "Some day to me means no day."

Patricia looked up quickly and noticed the little furrow on his brow.

"It is not like you to be despondent, Lal," she said, with a touch of reproach. "You have worried too much, and eaten too little of late I think. I want you to promise me not to give another thought to the Jews whilst we are down here. Let us be happy as long as we can."

Had she been less unselfish, the girl would have been jealous of the subject which engrossed so much of her husband's attention; but she was so anxious to be his helpmate as well as his wife, that she concentrated her own interest on the same question. She knew that when the call to action came he was the man of all men to be inspired with hope, and to press on towards the end he had in view. It was the forced inaction—the waiting for events—which proved such a strain to his mental system, and it was for this reason that she sought to divert his thoughts

elsewhere. She encouraged him to go out as much as possible, and scoured the surrounding country with him in his motor. There were also his numerous cottages to be inspected and his favourite tenants to be visited, for Montella was not only landlord, but friend.

It was while they were on their peregrinations through the village that they came across one Anne Whiteside, who had once been Lionel's nurse. They happened to meet her just outside her own dwelling, and she insisted on their entering to partake of tea. The Montellas, nothing loath, stepped into her little parlour, and settled themselves comfortably on the stiff horse-hair sofa. It was a pleasant little room in spite of its plainness, and everything in it was scrupulously clean. There was an old-fashioned piano which had probably not been opened for years, and a still more old-fashioned cabinet. The table—round in shape—was covered by an elaborately worked cloth, upon whose surface rested a number of books, including a huge Family Bible.

The old dame took such evident pleasure in preparing the tea, that the visitors felt no compunction in giving her the trouble. She toasted the cakes in the kitchen, but popped into the parlour every few minutes, fork in hand, to assure them that she would not be long. When all was ready, she donned her best widow's cap, and took her seat at the head of the table. Then Montella inquired after Tom.

"Oh, Tom's well enough," she replied, with affability. "He's grown mightily since you saw him last, Master Linie, only his poor brain seems to stand still. He is sitting in his corner of the kitchen, looking at a picture-book the lady up at the lodge

has given him. He's mighty fond of pictures, is my Tom."

The "Master Linie" caused a smile to flit across Patricia's face, and immediately she called up the vision of her husband as a child in frocks and pinafores.

"Is Tom your little grandson?" she asked.

The old nurse nodded.

"Yes; leastways, he isn't a little boy, for he will be fifteen next March, and he's an orphan, poor lad! Perhaps you would like to see him, my lady, after tea?"

Patricia answered in the affirmative, and proceeded to attack a somewhat substantial toasted bun. She knew that if she did not do justice to the tea, Mrs. Whiteside would feel aggrieved, so she strove courageously to demolish her share of the feast. Her duty fulfilled, she followed her kindly hostess to the kitchen, where the shining cleanliness of the stove and culinary utensils excited her admiration. In a corner by the window sat the afflicted boy. Patricia went over to him, and held out her hand.

He was small for his age, but he had a large and peculiarly-shaped head. His abnormally developed forehead contrasted almost grotesquely with the receding chin, and his small nose was out of proportion with both. His eyes were large, and surmounted by heavy lids, but there was little intelligence in their depths. They roamed shiftily from one object to another, never concentrating their gaze on anything for more than two or three seconds at a time. His mouth was large and weak, and he was unable to close it with firmness. Moreover, he was afflicted by an impediment in his speech, which

added to the difficulty he experienced in making himself understood. To strangers, it was hard to understand the purpose of the poor lad's existence, for to the end of his life he could be nothing but a useless burden. But his grandmother loved him, and never considered him a load of care. Since her husband's death, she had saved and pinched in order to put by enough to keep the boy when she was gone. It was nothing to her that he could not understand and appreciate her self-denial; all the wealth of her affection was lavished on the lad. He took no notice of Patricia's outstretched hand, but glanced at her out of the corner of his eyes, whilst Mrs. Whiteside coaxed him to say "How do you do?" to the lady. Montella's deep voice seemed to attract his attention more than Patricia's gentle tones, and an expression which was almost intelligent passed over his countenance as he gazed steadily for a moment at the stalwart figure of the man. Montella noticed it, and smiled back encouragingly, but he could not persuade the boy to speak.

"Do you think he has improved at all?" he inquired of the grandmother, whose face beamed with pride. "I suppose he is not able to go to school?"

"Oh, no; I couldn't bear to trust him out of my sight, and to think that the other boys might make game of him. Besides, he could not learn anything, poor lamb. There will be time enough for him to learn when he has put off this mortal flesh, and received his incorruptible inheritance."

She spoke so cheerfully that Lionel was puzzled.

"Do you mean when he has finished with this life?" he asked.

She nodded.

"That thought is my greatest comfort, Master Linie," she replied. "You see, if poor Tom cannot do any work in the world by reason of his poor weak brain, he cannot commit sins either. I would far rather have him as he is than see him grow up to drink and gamble like Widow Robson's son next door. And I know that the Lord will make up to him in the next world for all he has missed in this; so you see that it will all come right in the end, after all."

"What faith you have!" exclaimed Patricia, in admiration. "I suppose that you would have him cured if you could, all the same?"

"Certainly, my lady; I would travel to the other side of the earth if I thought that I should find an infallible cure at the end of the journey; but as the doctors have assured me over and over again that nothing can be done for the boy, I am resigned to the inevitable. As long as the Lord spares him to me I shall never complain."

"Your resignation is exemplary, nurse," said Montella, as they returned to the little parlour; and then Patricia having refastened her jacket, they took their leave.

They saw more of Mrs. Whiteside, however, before they went back to town. She had heard something of the anticipated Edict, and desired full information on the subject. Leaving Tom in the charge of a neighbour, she came up to the Abbey one morning, dressed in her best. The Montellas were in the library discussing a letter they had received from Dr. Engelmacher. The news was good, insomuch as building operations on the portion of land between Haifa and Akka, stretching to the Sea of Galilee, had now commenced.

"Haifa will be our capital for the present," the great leader wrote, after he had given vent to his jubilant feelings. "There is a fairly good harbour here, except when the wind is in the north-west. The town seems more capable of improvement and extension than any other on the coast of Palestine, and there is already a Jewish colony near by. By the time you and your charming wife come out, my dear Montella, your place of residence will be ready for your occupation. Picture to yourself a magnificent white-painted, flat-roofed house situated amidst olive-trees, with Mount Carmel to look down upon you, and hill after hill as far as eye can reach. Why, you will wonder how you could have remained in prosaic London for so many months at a time. And the thought that we are no longer on sufferance, but that this is our own country—our own little republic —will be best of all!"

He was not lacking in enthusiasm, this big, burly, and usually matter-of-fact doctor. His letter brimmed over with expressions of cheery optimism, and he refused to be disheartened by those who opposed his schemes. What mattered the growlings of France and Russia so long as Turkey could be conciliated by *backsheesh*? Once the Palestinian negotiations were concluded and the treaty signed, he was certain his people need have no fear.

Montella put the letter away as Mrs. Whiteside was shown into the room. To the old nurse every chair in the place was familiar, and she entered with the air of one who knew her way about. She remained standing, however, and refused to be seated. She did not wish to detain Master Linie and her ladyship; she had only come to make a request. Lionel

expressed his willingness to grant it whatever it might be. He thought she might want to change her abode, or to have some improvements made to the cottage, or something of a like nature. He was always ready to meet the wishes of his tenants, including this one, in spite of the fact that she lived rent free. But Mrs. Whiteside's desire lay in another direction altogether ; she was quite satisfied with the present condition of her house.

" Is it true that if Parliament persecutes the Lord's ancient people you will go and live in the Holy Land ? " she asked, in her quaint way. " Mr. Bell, the policeman, said you might ; but I said you would never leave Burstall Abbey for good."

" It will be a case of needs must, I am afraid, Anne," Montella replied, noticing the look of concern on her face. " If it comes to being false to Judaism or leaving the country, Lady Patricia and I will have to go. But I will not sell the Abbey except to some good and responsible man, and you need have no fear that you will suffer by the change. Your house belongs to you, nurse, and no one shall rob you of it. I will tell my solicitor to prepare a document to that effect."

The dame's eyes filled with tears.

" Oh, I wasn't thinking of that, Mr. Linie," she said quickly, with a touch of reproach. " Only it will nearly break my heart to see strangers in the old place. It was your grandfather who first got me a situation down here, and I've been here ever since. I remember every birth, marriage, and death in the family, and I've just counted time by those events."

" You have always been a faithful retainer, nurse,"

he rejoined kindly. "It is gratifying to know that our departure will be regretted."

"Ay, it will be regretted by every man, woman, and child in the place, but by me most of all. Mr. Linie, will you do me a favour—the greatest I've ever asked of you? Will you take me and my boy with you when you go?"

It was out at last, and the old woman's form quivered with excitement. If he were to refuse, it would be the greatest disappointment she had ever received. She was so devoted to the very name of Montella that she could not bear to be left behind. She watched Lionel's face as she put the question, and awaited his answer in an agony of suspense. Lady Patricia drew forward a chair, and made her sit down. She could see that the nurse was intensely moved.

"We intend dismissing our staff of servants both in London and down here if we go," the young man replied thoughtfully. "We shall be expected to employ Jewish labour as much as possible in the new land."

"But you will have to employ some Gentile servants to work for you on your Sunday, sir," she interposed eagerly. "I could see to that for you, and I could do all sorts of odd jobs for your lady and Lady Montella. I am getting old, maybe, but I can get about just as well as ever I could. I am sure you could manage the matter, Mr. Linie, if you were to try."

The pleading in her manner touched Patricia.

"Say yes, Lionel," she said to her husband, in a quiet voice. "As Mrs. Whiteside seems so anxious to accompany us, it would be a pity not to take her with us if we go."

Lionel smiled.

"The Queen hath spoken: so be it," he returned lightly. "Very well, nurse, I will promise you this. If we go, you shall go with us."

"And Tom, too, sir?"

"Yes, certainly. We should not think of parting you from your boy."

The old nurse was not effusive in her gratitude, but her eyes shone as she thanked them and went away.

"I believe that woman would be faithful to the death," Lionel said, as the door closed behind her. He felt that it was good to be the possessor of such loyal allegiance.

CHAPTER XIII

A DIFFICULT ALTERNATIVE

THE Jews' Expulsion Bill had been passed through the House of Lords at last, but the Act would not be put into full force until the April of the next year. The fourteen months' grace was given for charity's sake, in order that those Jews who came under the ban might have time to settle up their affairs. This was certainly an improvement on the Expulsion of 1290, when the Jews were deprived of all they possessed, and cast adrift in such a manner that many of them succumbed before reaching the other side of the Channel. Nevertheless, Athelstan Moore and his party had taken care to impose certain restrictions, so that the interim would not be entirely a respite. The immigration of aliens from abroad, whether *en route* for other countries or not, was immediately stopped, no foreign Jew of whatever status being allowed to land. No Jew was allowed to rent or purchase any new property, and the money-lending business was brought to an abrupt standstill. Jewish marriages were forbidden, and all Jews holding civic positions were deprived of office. Besides all this, there were numerous rules and regulations of lesser importance, so that the Jew would find himself hedged in on every side. But there existed a loophole of escape available to all;

it was nothing to the Government that it would be accepted only by the few.

This loophole consisted of a certificate of assimilation granted by every local magistrate on certain conditions. Any Jew or Jewess over the age of fifteen was eligible as a candidate, and children could be signed for by their parents. In order to obtain it, certain statements had to be declared on oath in the presence of a commissioner and three witnesses, and once the oath was taken, the penalty for breaking it would be extremely severe. The conditions were embodied in the following form of declaration:

> "I ..... hereby declare that I am a Jew (or Jewess) by birth only, and not by religion; that I totally renounce Judaism, and everything connected therewith; that I will mix freely with Gentiles, and do my best to dispel all clannishness and cliquism of race.
>
> "I further undertake to make the Christian Sunday my day of rest, and to celebrate socially the great Christian festivals; also to partake of ordinary Gentile food, and to cease to observe the Jewish dietary laws; to refrain from speaking or reading Hebrew, and from the use of Jewish idioms. I promise to abstain from every Jewish rite, to attend either a Christian, Theistic, or Unitarian place of worship, and to associate myself religiously and socially with either of these three bodies.
>
> (If eligible for marriage.) "I undertake to marry one of Gentile birth only, and to bring up any children of the said union in the faith of their Gentile parent.
>
> (If already married.) "I undertake to teach all my children, both now and in the future, the religion of the Church (Christian, Theistic, or Unitarian) I intend to make my own.
>
> (Signed) ....."

Here was to follow the full name address, and

description of the candidate, with photograph attached.

This certificate was granted only to those who were already British subjects either by birth or by naturalisation of five years' standing. No "greener" was therefore eligible, and foreign labour in Whitechapel was thereby done away with. The formula had been drawn up by Mr. Lawson Holmes, M.P., the ardent advocate of assimilation in its most thorough form. To him it seemed fair and just, and the only means of refining the Jewish element of the English nation to its due proportion. He considered that from the point of view of utilitarianism, mere sentiment must be put aside. He was not an anti-Semite, and he disagreed on many points with the Premier; he was undoubtedly a man of sound common sense.

As was to be expected, however, his formula evoked a storm of indignation in the Jewish press. Eloquent appeals to the patriotism of the race were issued and disseminated amongst the British Jews throughout the land, and meetings of protest were held despite the vigilance of the police. What People—were they ever so irresponsible—would renounce their race and religion, together with their ancient and illustrious past, at the mere word of command? The very thought of persecution was enough to make men cling to their cherished traditions with a new and greater strength. Such a result—the deepening of their peculiar unity—had been proved in the annals of history over and over again.

"I shall go and see Holmes to-night," Montella said to his wife, as soon as he had received notice

of the formula. "I cannot rest until I have made him see the absurdity of the whole thing. He used to be a friend of mine."

"Ask him what would be his answer if he were commanded to give up his birthright as a freeborn English Christian," advised his mother, with heat.

"But don't make matters worse by quarrelling with him, dear," added Patricia gently.

Montella promised to use his discretion; he was not of a fiery temperament. He met Mr. Lawson Holmes in the lobby of the House of Commons, and adjourned with him to his club. His friend insisted on dining first before entering on the subject, and Lionel consented to partake of a vegetarian repast. It was when they lingered over their wine that the Cabinet Minister began his defence. He could not help being impressed in spite of himself by Lionel's reproachful mien.

"Now, my dear fellow, let us survey the question from an economic standpoint," he began, as he puffed away at a cigar. "I shall proceed to dissect you metaphorically, if you have no objection?"

"None at all, so long as you leave the ego—that which is my real self—intact," Lionel replied.

"Very well, then, let us begin." The Minister removed his cigar from his lips, and placed it between his fingers. "First of all, I take it that you are one of the units of which the English nation is composed: that you are by birth and education an Englishman, and a subject of the King?"

Montella acquiesced.

"That being so, then, your tastes are naturally British, and your interest is to a great degree monopolised by the country of your birth. This is proved

by the mere fact of your being an ex-member of Parliament, in which capacity I know you desired to exercise your influence for the national good."

"Certainly."

"Yet when you are told that a certain legislation concerning the question of the Jews is for the national good, you steadfastly set your face against it, and resent its introduction. Being hemmed in by the narrowness of your creed, you are unable to get outside yourself, so to speak, and look at the matter from a rational and utilitarian point of view. That is the great difference between you and your parliamentary colleagues."

"Exactly," put in Montella eagerly. "I am a Jew."

"A Jew, yes; but I wish to discover how much of the Jew there is in you—the real Jew, according to the Oriental sense of the term. That there is an element of Hebraism in your moral and intellectual nature I do not dispute; but there are other and Occidental elements which you have inherited to a greater degree. Do you think your forefathers, when they left Palestine and lived in the West, were not affected by the influences of Hellenism, of Chivalry, of the Renaissance, of the Reformation, and of the Christian ethics in general, with which they came into contact? My dear fellow, the Occidental Jew—such as yourself—is no more like the Hebrew of old than I am! Do you think that if you were forced to live in strict accordance with the Talmudic law, you would feel that you were fulfilling the obligations of your race? I assure you that you would feel nothing of the kind; you would know that you were returning to darkness, shutting out civilisation and light."

"Perhaps so," replied the young man thoughtfully, "but for all that, I am a Jew, and not all the Occidental influences in the world have been able to break the bond which unites me to my forefathers. Blood is thicker than water, Mr. Holmes; and when once the blood of an Israelite flows in a man's veins, it is impossible for him to forget his heritage. He may renounce it as he likes, but by his looks, his temperament, his associations, his very tricks of gesture, he betrays it. That I have nothing in common with the typical Jew of tradition, and that I am a thorough Englishman at heart I am glad to admit; nevertheless there is a difference between myself and you, for instance. Small and indefinable though it may be, you know that it is there."

He had drawn his chair back from the table in his ardour, and leant back with a flush on his brow. His dark eyes glowed with the intensity of feeling, and about the youthful, clean-shaven face, with its splendid forehead, sensitive nostrils, and firm, yet gentle mouth, there was a nobility which it was hard to resist. Holmes secretly considered Montella a perfect specimen of his race, but he was loath to believe that he had inherited a single good quality from his Hebrew ancestors.

"As long as you remain an idealist, my dear boy, you will never be able to take a dispassionate view of the matter," he returned, with deliberation. "It is that sentimental clinging to tradition which is your people's bane. My standpoint, however, is simply this: A Jewish element in a nation is a desirable and almost an essential thing to have, but as soon as that element preponderates—as now—it becomes a danger to the State. Therefore it must be kept within

bounds, and those Jews who refuse to conform to the customs of this country must be weeded out. The only way out of the present crisis, it seems to me, is absorption, for as long as you Jews remain separatists you have no right to the full privileges of the land of your adoption. Therefore the Government has thought fit to take stringent measures to bring about this result; and although I admit that those measures seem unnecessarily harsh, I know that they are for the benefit of the nation at large. Let those Jews who cherish the scriptural tradition and maintain their clannishness return to the land of their fathers. There must be either assimilation or a separate Jewish state."

"And you think this justifies the persecution of two hundred and seventy thousand people, the majority of whom are loyal subjects of the King?"

The Minister frowned.

"I do not call it persecution when the alternative is such a reasonable one," he replied. "It is not as if we were compelling you to become Christians. You can retain your religious belief in the Absolute Unity by declaring yourselves Theists or Monotheists instead of Jews; the change is only in the name."

"But we are to give up our customs and our Sabbath, our fasts and our feasts, and everything which throughout the centuries has made Judaism the bond of union twixt Jew and Jew!" He sighed, knowing that they might argue till Doomsday, and yet remain as far asunder as the poles. Mr. Lawson Holmes was well informed concerning the Jews, and indeed possessed more knowledge than the average Gentile; but he was not capable of putting

himself in the position of a Jew; he could not understand the racial claim.

In spite of all Jewish obligations and the condemnation of the press, however, the assimilation plan was not unanimously rejected by the Jews. Some were too deaf to the claims of race and faith to care to retain them; others were less insensible, but could not bear the thought of suffering; others, again, were prepared to sacrifice their personal feelings for the sake of the public good. It was one thing to cherish one's old traditions, and look kindly on all things Jewish for old association's sake; it was quite another thing to have to pay for the privilege of doing so by expulsion, physical discomfort, money, and loss of pride. It was found that the majority of those Jews who had long mixed with the *élite* of English society, including some of the princes of finance, were quite willing to take the oath; but the number of faithful Jews increased as one descended the social scale. It is ever so when a religious or moral upheaval affects the heart of a people; for a passionate and public adherence to a religious or moral belief one has to look amongst the poor.

The Montellas were a notable exception amongst their prosperous *confrères*. The loyal faith and inherent sense of duty possessed by Lady Montella were shared by her son, and to him the rest of their co-religionists looked for help. Young as he was, he possessed all the characteristics which conduce to the making of a good leader, and in his devotion to the cause he made a worthy protector of his people's interests. It was good to know that amidst the trouble and confusion of this terrible crisis there was a man in Israel on whom one could depend—a

man who possessed the power of wealth and influence as well as that of intellectual attainments, whose very personality inspired confidence in the souls of the depressed, whose heart was in truth a heart of gold. Encouraged by the resolute faith of his mother, and influenced by the beautiful disposition of his wife, his character expanded in breadth without losing its manliness. Difficulties which would have filled others with alarm, were to him as so many easily surmounted obstacles to be overcome. With a clearness of vision, granted only to the few, he was able to look onward in the future, seeing not the immediate distress of present circumstances, but only the coming glory of that Eastern Land.

BOOK II

THE LAND OF THEIR FATHERS

"*And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*"—ISAIAH xi. 12.

CHAPTER I

PURIM IN HAIFA

HAIFA, the most modern city in Palestine, lay at the southern point of the Bay of Acre, about fifty miles north of Jaffa. Situated amid palm-trees, it retained its Eastern character whilst bearing witness to the innovations of the West. During the two years which had elapsed since the English Edict of Expulsion, the great army of Jewish artisans had laboured well. Rows upon rows of white bungalows had sprung up almost, as it seemed, in a night ; and although they could not boast of the substantiality of their construction, they could be improved by degrees. The greater part of the population consisted of British refugees, who, linked together by the same home ties, concentrated themselves as much as possible in one quarter, leaving their brethren of other nationalities to settle in different parts of the country. Therefore, although it was an accepted rule that Hebrew was to be learnt and spoken, they instinctively clung to their native tongue.

They were very aristocratic, these exiled English Jews. Like many English people who travel abroad, they considered themselves vastly superior to all the foreigners with whom they came into contact. They looked down on their poor Polish and Roumanian brethren, who in their turn considered the English

as irreligious moderns, scarcely worthy of the name of Jews. The brotherly feeling of equality which their leaders endeavoured to instil within them was as yet entirely lacking. Although of identical race and religion, and gathered together under one banner, the distinctions of class and nationality held them aloof.

It was the eve of Purim, the Feast of Lots. By decree of the council, a public holiday had been proclaimed ; for it was intended that this day should annually be observed, and that the rejoicings should be akin to the nature of a carnival. It was not until dusk, however, that the festivities began. The day had been unusually hot, even for Syria, and the majority of the inhabitants had chosen to spend the holiday indoors. At sunset came the breeze, and the heat of the day was replaced by a refreshing and welcome coolness. No matter how hot the day in Haifa, the nights were always cool.

In a sequestered corner of a city roof-garden were Lionel Montella and his wife. Above them the moon shone with dazzling splendour, making the numberless hills stand out as sentinels on guard, and causing the waters of the bay to sparkle like myriads of jewels. Patricia reclined against the cushions of her chair, and inhaled the fragrance of the breeze with keen enjoyment. She found the Syrian climate so trying that she was thankful for every breath of air.

The two years in Palestine had changed her little, and she was still a delicately fair and beautiful girl. Devotedly attached to her husband and baby boy, she found no occasion to pine for her friends in the West. She had always possessed the power of adapting herself to her surroundings, and she soon

became accustomed to the strangeness of her new life. Recently the Princess Charles von Felsen-Schvoenig had arrived to "do" Palestine, and was at present in Haifa, so that she was not entirely destitute of friends.

"The Princess is late," she remarked, as Lionel took a seat at her side. "She said she would come here to see the fun."

"Perhaps her carriage has some difficulty in getting through the crowd," Montella replied. "I am just wondering if this carnival idea of Engelmacher's is a wise one. It means practically setting the people loose."

"I rather like the idea," Patricia said thoughtfully. "The people have had such a serious time of it that it will do them good to relax for once. I do not see why they should not behave as well as the people at Nice or Cannes. The soldiers will keep them within bounds."

"I can scarcely reconcile myself to the thought of vociferous Jewish rejoicing," he rejoined. "We have sung in the minor key for so many years. Do you know, dearest, these last two years seem to have passed like a dream. I have difficulty in convincing myself sometimes that I am awake."

"A dream of hard work, then," was her reply. "To be governor of a city so cosmopolitan as Haifa, and where the inhabitants have scarcely settled down, is no sinecure, Lal, dear. I know of no man, not excepting Dr. Engelmacher himself, who could have done so much in so short a time. It is no wonder that there is already a streak of grey in your hair."

He bent down and kissed her with eyes full of tenderness. His life in Palestine would have been

almost unbearable without Patricia's sweet sympathy and encouragement; for there was much in the city and the people over whom he was placed that vexed him sometimes beyond endurance. Her love was the sustaining power which made the rough places smooth, and she possessed so winning a manner that she could exert a greater influence over the people by a single sentence than he could by a long and forcible address. Political administration could do much to improve the conditions of the city, but it could not instil a high moral tone.

The rustle of silken garments announced the approach of ladies, and Montella rose from his chair. The Princess, clad in a gown of filmy white, was accompanied by Lady Montella and Raie. Just at that moment the sound of cheering came up to them from below.

"My little car has met with the approval of the people," the Princess said, smiling. "It is the one I had in Rome."

Montella went over to the parapet and looked down. A small white swan-shaped car, drawn by four Arabian ponies, was being driven slowly away. It was decorated with choice flowers, and illuminated with tiny lamps, resulting in a fairy-like effect. In the procession which would presently set out for the mock hanging of Haman's effigy, it would serve as Queen Esther's triumphal car.

"Lady Montella took me over your new house this afternoon," the Princess informed Patricia, as she settled herself at her side. "It will be the show-place of Haifa. I like your Roman atrium immensely. Who designed it?"

"Lionel. He is so determined that I should have

an artistic home that he has spared no pains to make it beautiful for me. That is why the builders have taken so much time over it. For myself, I am quite happy in this little place, in spite of its plainness. It was a sort of hospice before we came, you know."

She smiled as she thought of her husband's enthusiasm over the house he was having built. That house was his hobby, and he took the same pride in it as an artist over his picture. And she knew the motive of his interest was concentrated in herself; in his eyes there was no home which could be beautiful enough for his wife.

"You must invite me to come and stay with you when it is finished," said the Princess lightly. "Meanwhile I must be content with my exalted position on the top of Mount Carmel. It is something, is it not, to stay in the very place where Elijah conquered the prophets of Baal? I love Mount Carmel!"

"You seem quite enamoured of Palestine altogether," said Montella, joining the group. "I did not think you would stay so long, Princess—you who have seen so much of other countries."

"I do like Palestine," she admitted readily. "I like the Oriental colouring, and it amuses me to note the curious blending of types and nationalities to be found here. Besides, Palestine possesses an interest all its own. I am not religiously inclined myself; but it is, after all, the *Holy Land*."

"The Holy Land!" repeated Patricia musingly. "Do you know of what the phrase puts me in remembrance? Why, of the dreaded Scripture lessons I had in the days of my childhood. My governess used to make me learn the exact position

of every place mentioned in the Bible, until I could almost find them, blindfolded, on the map. I am afraid I used to hate the Holy Land in those days. I never dreamt that I should go there myself."

"And do you like it better now that you are here?"

"Yes; but I should like any place for so long as my husband were with me."

She glanced affectionately at Lionel. The Princess sighed. Perhaps a pang of compunction smote her for having left her own husband to lead a solitary life in the castle at Felsen-Schvoenig. Hers was a curious blending of character which the German Prince could not understand. She was alternately defiant and yielding; unfortunately, whenever she came into contact with her husband, the defiance predominated.

"To-day's mail brought me a letter from Mamie," she said, after a moment's silence. "She seems to be getting on very well with her new husband, considering Moore's temper. She says that he is more interesting than Chesterwood, because she never knows what sort of a mood he will be in next. There is something in that, you know."

Patricia smiled.

"How does she like being the Prime Minister's wife?" she asked.

"Oh, Athelstan is horrid in that way," the Princess replied vaguely. "He doesn't believe in women meddling with politics; and won't tell her any State secrets."

"Sensible man!" remarked Montella, with a playful glance at his wife; and then the cheering having begun anew, he returned to the parapet.

"The procession is coming," announced Raie, who was looking down on the crowd. "Look: '*What shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour?*' There is the Scroll of Esther. I suppose they are going to the synagogue to read it."

The procession was headed by the students of the new Haifa Jews' College in full dress, and was unenlivened by the strains of any brass band. Instead, the weird chanting of Psalms in Hebrew smote the air, the voices sounding clear, but somewhat harsh. Men of all sorts and conditions followed on: the swarthy Pole walked side by side with the ruddy Saxon, the fair and slender Jerusalemite with the wiry Roumanian. Coming from a source so heterogeneous, they were yet able to sink their national differences on one common meeting-ground; and Hebrew, that sacred tongue of their fathers, served as a language for them all.

Lady Montella, with her arm within her son's, watched them with swelling heart. To her, there was a deeper significance than the mere joy of Purim in the procession of rejoicing Jews. The chord of racial nationalism which lay so far down in her nature responded as to an harmonious touch, and quivered with an emotion which could scarcely be expressed in words. Years ago she had dreamt of a free gathering under the sign of the Shield of David. It seemed as if her dream had at last come true.

"Can I go down amongst the crowd, Aunt Inez?" asked Raie, breaking in upon her reverie. "I want to have a look at all the funny things the men are selling."

"It would not be safe, dear," Lady Montella replied. "You would need a stronger escort than Anne."

"You can come with me presently, Raie," volunteered the Princess, noticing the girl's air of disappointment. "If Lady Montella has no objection, you shall spend the night with me at the Mount Carmel Hotel."

Raie was delighted, and having obtained permission, went to get ready forthwith. An hour later they were being driven through the densely thronged streets. The festivities had taken a more hilarious turn, but there was nothing riotous in the behaviour of any of the people. When the Jew rejoices as a religious duty, he does it with his whole heart; but as he is not addicted to drink, he is able to keep his merriment within bounds. The throwing of the modern confetti and the trampling underfoot of Haman's effigies constituted the chief source of amusement. Indoors the better-class families were celebrating the occasion by a grand Purim feast.

Arrived at the summit of the mount, they found the hotel in a state of confusion. A tourist—arrived only that day—had been attacked by an Arab in one of the caves, and—it was said—lay in a critical condition. It was the first time for many years that an outrage had been committed so near the town.

The Princess was much concerned, for she had made the acquaintance of the tourist in question immediately after his arrival.

"His name is Frank Merryweather, and he comes from Australia," she said to Raie, who was always anxious for information. "He is one of the finest men I have ever seen."

"He is not a Jew?" affirmed the girl, with interrogation.

"I am not sure. He is the sort of man one can't

easily place; but as he spoke of going on to England shortly, I suppose he is not."

Later in the evening, the physician, who happened to be staying in the hotel, informed them that his patient's wound was not so serious as had been feared. The next morning the patient himself was brought up to the roof-garden to enjoy the air before the heat of the day.

The Princess and her friend were up early, and found him propped up on a couch beneath a shady palm. The air was fragrant with the breath of tropical flowers, and was made melodious by the sweet carolling of the birds. The sick man lay with his eyes closed, but he opened them as he heard the rustling of a woman's dress. His glance first fell on the stately figure of the Princess, and his features relaxed in greeting. Then he looked at Raie, who, in a simple linen gown which suited her well, might have stood for a picture of perfect girlhood.

"Miss Emanuel, Mr. Merryweather," said the Princess; and Raie shook hands with a new tinge of colour in her cheeks. Then an almost involuntary look passed between them—the intuitive sign when Jew meets Jew.

"We were distressed to hear of your accident last night," the Princess said, as they took their seats beside him. "Do tell us about it. Do you feel better this morning?"

"Oh, yes, thank you," he replied, in a genial voice. "It was a mere scratch, which the people chose to magnify into a serious wound. I shall be as right as ninepence pretty soon. It was my own fault for prying where I wasn't wanted. I got into one of the caves on the other side of the mount, not knowing

that it was the parlour of an Arab gentleman until he set on me and whipped out a knife. I wouldn't have intruded if I had known it was his den. I guess I'll keep to the township for the future, anyway."

"Have you been long in Syria?" asked the Princess, when they had both commented on the adventure. "I suppose you have visited Jerusalem and the neighbourhood?"

He answered in the negative.

"I came from Port Said to Jaffa, and from Jaffa to here," he explained. "I am really *en route* from Australia to England."

Raie wondered what business had brought him to Haifa, but she was too well-bred to ask.

"I suppose England is your home?" she said gently, thinking that there was no harm in questioning so far.

"I have no home, Miss Emanuel," was his prompt reply. "The world is my home."

There was a touch of sadness in his words, as well as in his voice. The girl glanced up suddenly, and meeting the gaze from his deep eyes looked as suddenly away. She felt instinctively that this was a man who had been brought into contact with the rough side of life, but who yet retained his natural refinement of birth. He interested her strangely, and so strongly that she longed to find out more about him. If he were a Jew, how was it that he intended to go to England? Surely he must be aware of the expulsion of the Jews?

She was so impressed by his personality that she could not help thinking of him, even after her departure from the hotel. She visited her people—who lived in one of the white houses in the suburbs—

later in the day, and could scarcely refrain from mentioning him to them. She was glad, however, that she was able to check herself in time, for Mrs. Emanuel's badinage was the last thing that she desired. In talking to her mother, however, a half-forgotten chord of remembrance was stirred in her brain — a psychological connection between Mr. Merryweather and a former conversation. She tried to fathom it out, but the solution escaped her. One thing she was certain about: she had seen something of the tourist before.

CHAPTER II

RAIE AND THE TOURIST

THE Princess had taken a fancy to Raie. She admired the girl's winsome face, with its coronal of curly hair, and the animation which shone in her dark eyes. She liked, too, her naïve manner and natural freshness, for, in spite of her thoughtfulness, Raie was a child of Nature. In England the two had scarcely spoken, although they had met several times; but in Haifa the conditions of life were different, and the friendship, once begun, soon ripened. Thus it happened that Raie spent a great part of her time at the Mount Carmel Hotel, either lunching or dining with her friend.

The air of mystery which pervaded the Australian tourist still prevailed. He would give a certain amount of information about himself, but no more; and concerning his own life he was extremely reticent. He seldom ventured far into the town, and had not troubled to call at the Government House. What attracted him to Haifa, therefore, no one exactly knew; he had evidently come for a private purpose of his own.

Now the Princess possessed acute powers of perception. She soon saw that Mr. Merryweather took pleasure in Raie's society, and that Raie reciprocated in like manner. So she set the seal of

her approval on the acquaintance by giving them opportunities for its further cultivation; and in spite of her worldly wisdom she did not pause to consider whether such a friendship were desirable. The tourist was much older than Raie, and of his connections nothing was known. Yet she encouraged the girl to form a liking for him which gradually deepened into love.

He had travelled so much that conversation never languished for want of subject matter. Raie was profoundly interested in his graphic accounts of life in the bush, but she would have preferred to hear him talk about himself. She did not even know if her instinctive belief that he belonged to her own race was correct; for although they had often approached the subject, he had not yet confessed himself a Jew. She thought so much of him that she was determined to find out. It would make all the difference in the world if he were not a Jew.

He was fond of taking excursions in the surrounding country on horseback, and often remained away over night. He invited the Princess and Raie to picnic with him near the ruins of the Castellum Peregrinorum of the Crusaders one day, and seemed so bent upon their going, that they did not like to refuse. They set out at dawn, accompanied by two other gentlemen who were staying at the hotel, and three Arab servants. Their way lay along a cultivated plain between the mountains and the sea, with villages nestling on the slopes above them, and rocks and ruins below. The gaudily-dressed peasants gazed at them with distrust, evidently regarding them as intruders. Arrived at Athlit, they put up their horses at a neighbouring khan, and prepared to partake of a

light repast. Their appetites had been sharpened by the ride.

Raie felt like a schoolgirl out for a holiday. She had come out with the express intention of enjoying herself, and she meant to fulfil it to the letter. Outside the khan lay a solemn-looking camel; immediately she made up her mind that she must have a ride.

The Arab in charge was a gentle-looking individual, with somewhat melancholy eyes. He wore both a tarbûsh and keffiyeh on his head, and his abbâ—or shawl—fell from his shoulders in graceful folds. He shrugged his shoulders when Mr. Merryweather's servant proffered Raie's request, and in consideration of *backsheesh* allowed her to mount. This was easier said than done, for when the camel began to rise from the ground she was nearly thrown over his head. She clung on, however, with all the tenacity of which she was capable, and felt as if she had attained a victory when the animal set off at a jog-trot.

Mr. Merryweather walked alongside in order to keep her company, and endeavoured to sustain a conversation with the Arab on the way. When the girl declared that the motion gave her a peculiar sensation, he suggested a halt, and the animal was brought to a sudden standstill. Raie was not sorry to dismount, and gave a sigh of relief when her feet touched the ground. She had no desire to repeat the experience which had been hers on the sea.

Her companion paid the Arab, and sent the camel back to the khan. Then he drew Raie towards one of the fine carob-trees which abound in that district, and bade her rest beneath its shade. She settled

herself comfortably on a boulder, and he flung himself down at her side. The opportunity for which he had sought had come.

"Miss Emanuel," he said suddenly, "are you fond of Heine?"

The question was so unexpected that Raie glanced at him in surprise.

"Do you mean the German poet?" she asked.

"Yes."

The girl waxed thoughtful.

"I admire his genius," she replied, at length, "but some of his poems irritate me. He is so apt to descend from the sublime to the ridiculous, and to him absolutely nothing is sacred. He has the poet's mind without the poet's soul. What makes you think of Heine, though, just now?"

"I was thinking of a little poem I read of his a long time ago—'Life's Salutations.' It was about meeting each other on the highway of life, but having little time to greet before the postillion gives the starting signal, and we have to be off again.

> "'In passing each other we nod and we greet
> With our handkerchiefs waved from the coaches,
> We fain would embrace, but our horses are fleet,
> And speed on, despite all reproaches.'

That seems to apply to our case, does it not? We have had time to greet each other, but that is all. The signal has been given for my coach to start."

"Do you mean that you are going away?" Raie asked, with a sinking at her heart.

He nodded his head.

"Yes," was his reply. "I have stayed here much longer than I intended, already. I must be in London at the beginning of next month."

"You are going to England!" she exclaimed, with disappointment in her voice. If he were going to England, he could not be a Jew; and if he were not a Jew, he could be nothing to her. She glanced at him with an unspoken question in her eyes, whilst across her bright face flitted an expression of pain.

He captured one of her little sunburnt hands, and held it between his own.

"You are sorry—Raie?" he said, in a quiet voice. "Tell me the truth."

"Yes, I am sorry." She glanced away, and refused to meet his gaze. "I can't help being sorry. You have been so kind to me."

She had never felt so near crying in her life, and yet she could have laughed at her own foolishness. A mist rose before her eyes, and the mountains in the distance seemed blurred. She released her hand, and fumbled for her tiny lace handkerchief. Mr. Merryweather's features relaxed into an expression of gentleness.

"Raie," he said, with a tender accent on the name, "I am going to England, but I am not bound to stay there. In three months' time I can be back in Haifa—that is, if you will give me permission to come."

"I?" she exclaimed evasively. "What has it to do with me?"

"Everything. If I return to Haifa it will only be for you. Perhaps I have no right to speak to you like this, dear, but I could not go away without declaring myself. Raie, look me in the face and tell me the truth. Do you love me?"

He raised her chin gently with his two hands, and

brought her face on a level with his own. The girl's cheeks grew crimson as she looked back into the depths of his eyes. She answered not a word, but he was satisfied.

"You do love me," he said, with conviction. "I can read the answer in your eyes."

There was a moment of silence as he relaxed his hold. The girl was undergoing an inward struggle, and her heart beat fast. She was wondering what the Montellas would think of her secret lover, and what her mother would say. Would they be angry with her, and consider her conduct underhand? Would they approve of one who was presumably a Christian and a wanderer? Would it not be wiser to send him away before it was too late? In less than a minute these suggestions crowded in upon her mind.

Mr. Merryweather seemed to guess her thoughts.

"I wonder if you love me enough to trust me, dear," he said slowly. "You have a right to want to know something about the man you intend to marry, but I cannot tell you all about myself just yet. I can assure you, though, that I come of a good family—my father is a baronet; and although I am over thirty, I am a bachelor, and have never had a love-affair. More than this I cannot tell you now, but you shall know everything some day. Until then, will you be content to take me on trust? Will you promise to become my wife?"

He spoke in the sharp, disjointed sentences which were—with him—a sign of deep feeling. Raie looked up at him almost piteously, and for the moment knew not how to reply. He was so much older and stronger than herself that she instinctively felt that resistance would be useless; besides, she did not

want to resist. But something within urged her not to be rash, and she felt compelled to listen to her conscience.

"I do trust you," she answered, almost inaudibly, "but I cannot promise to become your wife. I owe so much to Lady Montella that I could not—I dare not—engage myself without her consent. You see I believe in you because—because I know that you are good; but in her case it would be so different. I am sure she would not give her consent to our engagement unless she were satisfied that you—that you—oh, I can't explain, but you know what I mean. And she is so particular that I am afraid she would never allow me to marry away from my religion. I suppose you are—not a Jew?"

She studied his features as though their contour would reveal what she sought. He was neither fair nor dark, and his life in the open had lent a ruggedness to his countenance which baffled her completely. Fortunately she was not kept long in suspense.

"That objection can be easily dispelled," he answered, with a slight touch of colour. "I have the right to call myself a Jew."

She gave a sigh of relief.

"And yet you are going to England?" she questioned, not yet satisfied. "And—and—Merryweather is not a Jewish name?"

He bent down and regarded her steadfastly once more.

"Did you not say you would trust me, Raie?" he rejoined, with a touch of reproach. "What if, for a certain grave reason, I have been obliged to change my name? Listen, child,"—his voice became almost stern—"I am a Jew; but for many years past I have

made mankind my brethren, the world my country, and God in Nature my religion. When I was a youth I was expelled from home and people for a crime which I never committed, since when I have lived alone. Recently I have had reason to believe that by returning to England I may be able to prove my innocence, and as I have made my fortune out on the goldfields, I shall have the power that money can give. I can tell you no more, perhaps I have told you too much already; but I have made you a most serious confidence. Surely you can trust me in return?"

Her face was full of trouble.

"I do trust you!" she repeated, with a catch in her breath; "but what you have told me makes it harder still. Unless she knows the whole truth, I know Lady Montella will not consent."

"She must know nothing for the present. Not a word of what I have told you must pass your lips. Raie, my darling, I must insist on this for the sake of us both. Promise me you will not say anything of this."

She promised—but with reluctance, because she hated to have a secret from her foster-aunt.

"Won't you tell me your real name?" she asked half wistfully. "I do not want to think of you as 'Frank Merryweather' if that is only a pseudonym."

But he shook his head.

"You must have patience a little longer, dear," he rejoined. "I dare not tell you yet."

She glanced at him with reproach in her eyes, but forbore to put it into words. He bent down and kissed her on the forehead, and then assisted her to rise. They were both silent on the way back to

the khan, and Raie, at least, was deep in thought. Suddenly a flash of light as dazzling as a revelation burst in upon her mind. She knew now why her lover's personality had always seemed so familiar to her. The son of a Jewish baronet—expelled from home—fortune made in Australia. It was impossible that there could exist two such men.

She stopped short in her walk, and faced him with excitement.

"It is not necessary for you to tell me your name," she said hurriedly. "I know it already. I first heard of you from my mother some months ago, and I have seen your photograph. You are the son whom Sir Julian so cruelly disinherited. You are Lionel's half-brother—Ferdinand Montella!"

CHAPTER III

A GIRL IN LOVE

HE met her gaze of astonishment with a curious expression on his face.

"Ferdinand Montella is dead," he returned slowly, "or at least he is sleeping. For the present Frank Merryweather remains to take his place. You are a clever child, Raie. I did not think you would find me out so easily."

"I seemed, somehow, to know you from the first," she said gladly, as they continued their walk. "There was something about your personality which gave me the impression of having met you before. I suppose I never have met you before; but your ways of looking and speaking are very like your poor father's, and of course I knew him well."

The adjective arrested his attention.

"You do not mean to say that my father is—" He broke off shortly. "Why did you say 'poor'?"

"Because he is dead." Then realising her abruptness, she was filled with compunction. "Oh, I am so sorry," she added respectfully. "I ought not to have told you like that. I made sure that you knew; it was in all the papers. He died over three years ago."

The tourist's face grew grave, and unconsciously hardened.

"I have lived practically away from civilisation for some time, where no news could reach me," he

rejoined, "but I do not suppose I should have been sent for, even had it been possible. Sir Julian treated me very unjustly, Raie, and I find it hard to forget. Still, he was my father, and loved me when I was a child. I am sorry he has died believing me guilty."

Raie was silent for a few moments, and left him to his own reflections; but before they rejoined their party, she spoke again.

"Why did you come to Haifa without making yourself known to your people, Ferdinand?" she asked, eager for information.

"Frank, dear, not Ferdinand—for the present," he corrected, starting slightly at the name. "My coming to Haifa was a mere chance, and it was not until I arrived here that I learnt that my brother Lionel was Governor. I suppose Burstall Abbey has been sold? Who lives there now?"

"It belongs to Earl Torrens, Lionel's father-in-law; but it is standing empty for the present. Do you remember the nurse—Anne—from Thorpe Burstall? She came with us to Palestine, and is with us now."

"Anne Whiteside? Yes, I remember her well. I must be careful, or she will recognise me. She was always very shrewd."

Raie glanced up at him thoughtfully.

"I wish you would go and see Lady Montella and Lionel before you go away," she said, with a touch of entreaty. "I am sure they would receive you well."

He shook his head.

"I intend to have nothing to do with the Montellas until my innocence has been proved," he rejoined firmly. "I do not desire pity or forgiveness; I want only justice."

"But you will claim your title, surely? Even if it

is not of much value away from England, it is your right. Some day we may all return."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"For myself I care nothing; I have roughed it too long to wish for anything of the sort. If I claim it, dearest, it will be for you."

The colour came into her cheeks, and she made no reply. Of all the strange coincidences she had met with during her short life, this seemed the strangest. Her eyes shone with a new light when, a few minutes later, she rejoined the Princess; and on the homeward journey she was unusually silent. As they passed through the outskirts of Haifa, she found herself with her lover at the head of the little cavalcade a few paces in advance, and begged him to allow her to confide in her friend. She was so anxious to tell someone that she was afraid she would not be able to refrain from introducing the subject; so Ferdinand, knowing that the Princess could be trusted, consented. The occasion was celebrated by a dainty supper in the hotel, and Raie's eyes shone as they had never done before. And even when her lover took his departure a few days later, the love-light in her eyes remained, so that the Montellas wondered what had come to her, and why she was so unusually joyous. Perhaps the girl wondered at herself, for it seemed almost incredible that the mere fact of knowing Ferdinand should make so great a difference. But the fact remained, and she had no power to prevent it—indeed, she had no wish that it should be otherwise. Gazing into her mirror one morning, she was astonished to find how well she looked—how her eyes sparkled, and how vivacious was the expression on her face.

"I shall be quite pretty by the time Ferdie comes back," she said softly to herself, exhibiting for the first time a sense of vanity. "I want to be pretty for him. For myself, I do not care at all; but for him—"

And then she leant her elbows on the dressing-table and lost herself in a delicious reverie; but presently a cloud passed over her brow. Supposing Ferdinand were unable to prove his innocence, what would she do? Had she the courage to marry him with a stain upon his name and character; and even if she had the courage, would it be right for her so to do? Besides, she could not marry him whilst he retained his pseudonym, and neither in Palestine nor England could they be united under the name of Montella. Looking into the future, she foresaw difficulties so immense as to be almost insuperable, but she could not bear the thought of ever having to give up the man she loved. No sacrifice would be too great so far as she personally was concerned; but she hated the thought of grieving the one to whom she owed more than she could ever repay. It was not in her nature to act clandestinely or to rebel against authority, especially when she knew that that authority was worthy of esteem. So that if it came to breaking with either Lady Montella or her lover, the struggle would be keen and bitter; for whichever way it went she would lose a friend. She could only hope that what she dreaded might never come to pass, and that her lover would return with his honour unimpeached. Once he were able to reclaim his forfeited rights, all impedimenta to their marriage would be removed. Her foster-aunt would not withhold her consent without due cause.

"Haifa seems to agree with you better than it does with us," her mother remarked, when in the cool of early morning she betook herself to the little white bungalow which the Emanuels inhabited. "You are looking splendid, Raie—different to our pasty-looking, freckled Harriet."

Raie was sorry for her sister, who, since the dissolution of her engagement with the young man who had cruelly jilted her some months before they left England, had come in for an unpalatable number of home-truths.

"Harriet cannot help her freckles, mother," she rejoined, taking up the cudgels in her defence. "I think she finds the climate trying, and I know she does not like the food."

Mrs. Emanuel tossed her head in impatience.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed, with anger. "She doesn't give the food a chance; it is all I can do to get her to eat at all. Ever since her engagement was broken off, she has done nothing but mope and pine for Harry Levi. She has lost all her good looks, and she takes no trouble over her appearance; and I'm sure the fellow isn't worth a thought. I'm ashamed of her, and that's the truth; I never thought she would develop into a crotchety old maid."

The girl was silent, scarcely knowing what to say. Thinking of her own lover, she felt more sympathy for her unfortunate sister than she dare own. But when Harriet made her appearance a little while later, she could not help experiencing a shock. Was it really love—or the lack of it—that could make such a change?

"She does look ill," she admitted, when the girl had left the room. "I wonder if it would do her

good to stay at Government House for a few days? I am sure Lady Montella would allow me to invite her. What has become of Harry Levi, I wonder. He is not in Palestine?"

"No, of course not. He is one of the 'assimilated' Jews. I suppose he will marry a *shicksa*,[1] and bring up his children as Christians. He doesn't deserve to get on, spoiling a girl's life as he did. I'd like to 'assimilate' him, the scoundrel! There wouldn't be much of him left by the time I had finished. I hope you'll be more careful when you get a young man, Raie."

Raie blushed to the roots of her hair. "My young man would not throw me over," she said playfully, and quickly changed the subject. With a somewhat forced carelessness she inquired if her mother were getting more used to the place.

"Getting used to the place?" repeated Mrs. Emanuel, in her usual high-pitched voice. "I shall never get used to Haifa if I live to be a hundred. When I want to be in bed, I've got to get up because it's cool, and when I want to be up and about, I've got to go to bed because it's hot. And as soon as I move out of doors I'm pestered with a lot of Moslem beggars, until I come home without a farthing in my pocket. What with the difference in the food, and the water that isn't fit to drink, and the funny people with their silly jargon, and the stupid currency, which gives me a headache every time I have to buy anything, and the peculiar mode of living, it's enough to turn one's hair grey. Besides, the place is overcrowded. Palestine is too small for all the people who want to settle down here."

Raie could not resist a smile.

[1] Gentile (fem.).

"There is bound to be a little overcrowding until the people are more dispersed," she returned convincingly. "When the other towns are ready to receive them they will leave the larger cities. There are building operations going on all over the country, and in a few years Palestine will be extended to double its present area. So you see there will be room for everybody, mother."

"Give me Canonbury," continued Mrs. Emanuel, following her own train of thought. "I would rather live in the Petherton Road than anywhere else in the world;" and no amount of persuasion or argument would make her think otherwise. She was too old to bear transplanting successfully, Raie thought.

She found her foster-aunt and Lionel in the morning-room when she returned to the Government House an hour later. They were engaged in a desultory conversation, for Lady Montella was writing, but a few words reached her as she passed down the corridor. Her heart seemed to leap, and she paused irresolute at the door; for they made mention of her lover's name.

"Anne declares she has seen Ferdinand in the town," Lionel was saying, as he put down the newspaper he was reading; "but why should Ferdinand come to Haifa? And if he did come, would he not seek us out?"

Then seeing Raie's figure framed in the doorway, he spoke of something else, but not before the girl had had time to hear.

"Ferdie will have to be careful when he comes back, or he will be discovered," she thought, as she advanced farther into the room.

It was a very difficult matter to elude the lynx-like eye of the old nurse, Anne.

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNOR OF HAIFA

MONTELLA was alone in his study, with books and papers scattered on the table before him; but although he was apparently reading, very little of the printed matter penetrated so far as his brain. Deep in thought, his brow was furrowed with lines which should not have appeared on the forehead of so young a man; indeed, his whole appearance bore evidence to the fact that he had been severely tried. It was possible that the responsibility of governing the English portion of Palestine weighed too heavily upon his shoulders, or that he took upon himself more than was absolutely necessary for the welfare of his people. Certain it was that his energies were boundless, and that nothing was too great for him to achieve; but he could not spend himself without losing some of his inherent vitality, and while he was indefatigable in his efforts for the public good, his own health suffered from lack of care.

There is nothing which ages a human being so quickly as worry; and of this Montella had his share. The race for wealth among the Europeans in Palestine was keener even than it had been in the West, and the unscrupulous greed of the people, who, in the ardour of competition would financially cut each other's throats, grieved him more than he cared to

own. Not satisfied with comfort and peace in the new land, their one desire was to attain to wealth, the means to which entailed the cost of suffering to hundreds less fortunate than themselves. To Montella it was like a disease, sapping the moral strength of the people at the very root; but neither he nor his colleagues were able to conquer it; all they could do was to deprecate the evil.

And now there was a new difficulty with which to contend. Montella had seen it coming almost from the first, but he had ever done his best to drive it back. It arose from the relations twixt civil and religious Judaism, and threatened to cause a serious split in the camp. The Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Ben Yetzel, desired to exercise supreme authority in imitation of the papal power, whereas Montella and his party opposed despotism in religious matters, and favoured freedom of thought. To those who wished for progress and the civilising influences of the West, rigid orthodoxy was well-nigh impossible, and they chafed beneath its yoke; but the sacerdotal dignitaries declared that the loosening of the ceremonial ties would eventually mean the downfall of Judaism, and insisted on the strict enforcement of the letter of the law. It was the old well-known quarrel between Church and State, each striving for the mastery, and neither prepared to grant the concessions which would make for peace. And the Jews, although lacking nothing in astuteness, were unable to profit by the experience of other countries once similarly placed. They were obliged to learn their hard lesson alone.

The Chief Rabbi's recent visit to Haifa had been an inauspicious event. Although famed for his piety

and scholarship, the great man's views were of necessity cramped by his narrow surroundings. He might have been a Hillel or a Gamaliel had he lived in Hillel's day ; but he could not realise the doctrine of evolution with regard to the moral nature of man ; and to him the world continued in the same stage of development as it existed two thousand years ago. Therefore there were many customs of the English Jews in Haifa of which he keenly disapproved ; and that the Governor's wife should be of Gentile birth but added to his ire. Montella, ardent upholder of Judaism though he ever remained, was at the same time clear-headed and rational, and had no patience with the Talmudic narrowness which converted a thoughtful man into a mere automaton. His principles of sincerity and truth abolished all the ceremonial observances which had degenerated into empty forms ; and he hated anything approaching priestcraft, even though it were Jewish. His opinions, happily for himself, were shared by the most intelligent of his colleagues, who openly showed their resentment towards the interference of Ben Yetzel ; but the majority agreed that every religious body should have its head, and respected the Chief Rabbi's position too much to presume to criticise his views.

A Hebrew letter from Ben Yetzel lay on the young man's desk, and it was this which caused his present thoughtful mood. Taking up a pen, he began to translate his reply, but with a sudden gesture of impatience he tossed it aside. At the same moment the door opened slowly to admit a small boy in a white frock, and accepting this as a welcome interruption to his work, he drew back his chair. The little

lad ran up to him with a chuckle of delight, and clambered on to his knee.

"Daddy, I'se tum!" he exclaimed, giving voice to an obvious fact. "I'se here, daddy, wif oo!"

Montella's face brightened.

"What a naughty little boy to run away," he answered lovingly. "What have you done with nurse?"

"Nanna up'tairs in garden wif mammy," was his prompt reply. "Me 'tay here."

Then he rested his golden head against his father's coat, and gave vent to a sigh of satisfaction. A few minutes later he was fast asleep.

He was a beautiful boy, and his pink cheeks glowed with health. In spite of the fairness of his hair and complexion, his eyes were dark, and fringed with long lashes of dusky brown. To his parents he was an endless source of pleasure and amusement, and nothing delighted them more than to notice his comical little ways. Montella carried him up to the roof-garden, and gave him over to the nurse. It was his usual hour of sleep.

"I think he has been running about too much," his mother said, as the maid bore him away. "It is easy to get over-tired in this heat. And you, darling, you look fagged. Can't you take a little rest?"

He threw himself down in the deck-chair at her side, and having asked permission, prepared to smoke. Patricia applied the match to his cigar, and then leant back with an expression of content.

"It is good to have you with me, Lal," she said softly. "You have had so little time to spare lately for baby and me."

He glanced into her clear blue eyes with compunction,

"Never mind, sweet, I will make up for it later on," he replied cheerfully. "When I get my full staff of assistants I shall not have so much to do. What with Ben Yetzel pulling one way and Engelmacher another, it takes me all my time to steer clear between the two. However, I don't want to worry you with those affairs; let us throw dull care to the winds."

"The Chief Rabbi does not like me," Patricia said thoughtfully. "I felt, all the time he was here, that he disapproved of everything I did. I wonder why?"

"Because he is a confounded idiot," rejoined her husband, with heat. "If you had been an old Polish woman with a *scheitel*[1] he would have taken you to his heart. It's jealousy, my dearest, nothing else. He doesn't like the idea of my having such a sweet and beautiful woman for a wife. I suppose, too, he considers you a sort of heathen because you are not of Jewish birth."

"I think I am a sort of heathen," the girl repeated slowly, with thoughtful eyes. "I am no more a Jewess at heart than our baby is a Jew. I have tried to love the Jewish religion for your sake, Lal, but I can't succeed. It seems so full of ceremonies which are beyond my comprehension, and which puzzle me dreadfully. I am afraid you must be very disappointed in me, dear."

"Not at all. I never expected you to follow in my mother's steps. *She* has all the claims of ancestry and old association to make her love her faith; you have nothing except your love for me."

"It is of our child I am thinking," she continued quietly. "How can I teach him his faith as a mother ought to do?"

[1] Wig.

"Leave it to his grandmother," Montella advised carelessly. "It will be a task after her own heart. There is no need to worry yourself about that, dear; I assure you little Julian will grow up a strict enough Jew."

Patricia sighed.

"I am glad you are not dissatisfied with me, Lionel," she said, placing her hand within his own. "Sometimes I have thought—and Lady Montella has hinted—that you would have been happier with a Jewish wife."

Lionel sat bolt upright and pressed her hand to his lips. "Stuff and nonsense," he returned, with indignation. "You will make me very angry if you have such foolish thoughts. I would not exchange you for all the Jewesses in the world." Then he laughed at the idea conjured up by his last sentence, but added seriously, "Has my mother said anything to make you unhappy, dear?"

"Oh, no, nothing at all. It is not what she says—" She broke off abruptly, and was silent for a moment, whilst the colour rushed into her cheeks. "I love you so passionately, Lionel, that I cannot bear to think there is any flaw in your love for me," she continued hurriedly. "And when these Jewish ceremonies crop up, they seem like barriers to drive us away from each other. And I thought when Ben Yetzel was here that you were a little bit ashamed of my ignorance of the Jewish laws. And that is why—because I love you—I have been so anxious to learn."

She nestled her head against his shoulder, and a tear fell with a splash on to his coat. Montella

was startled beyond measure, for she was a woman who seldom wept. Either she was suffering from debility, or there must be some serious cause for her emotion. Hastily he jumped to the former conclusion—his beloved could not be well.

"My darling!" he exclaimed, in dismay, tenderly stroking her hair. "Whatever has happened to give you such ideas? I'm afraid I have left you too much to yourself of late; I am such a selfish creature when I get wrapped up in my work. Why, Patricia, don't you know what people think of you in Haifa? You are the most admired woman in the town, and the most respected. And you have endeared yourself to the heart of everyone by going so much amongst the poor. Do you want me to tell you that you are my queen, and that with you at my side, I am the most fortunate man in the world? Because that is the truth, and you ought to know it without needing to be told!"

He could not say more; and his words were uttered with heartfelt sincerity. Patricia, duly comforted, dried her eyes, and a smile like a burst of sunshine after rain illumined her face. Feeling that he could not settle down to work again, her husband fetched her hat and gloves, and together they sauntered through the white streets and across the market square. Their destination, as usual, proved to be the new house, the inevitable magnet which drew him towards itself whenever he had a little time to spare. The builders and decorators were still hard at work, and the sound of the hammers as they fell rhythmically upon the stone greeted them as they approached. A sloping avenue of palm-trees led up to the principal entrance, and the house, situated on

a slight eminence, commanded a fine view. From the observatory, which was nearly completed, the mountain ranges of Galilee and Phœnicia, stretching away to Lebanon and Hermon in the distance, could be seen, as well as the Bay of Acre and Mediterranean Sea. The position was the best that could possibly have been obtained; for if there were but a breath of air stirring it would be obliged to find its way here. Patricia already felt the difference as she seated herself on the one chair of which the roof boasted, and drew a deep breath of relief. Montella left her for a few minutes while he went to give a few directions in various languages to the cosmopolitan band of workmen; but in a very few minutes he was back again.

"Your boudoir is nearly finished, dear," he said, with jubilance in his tone. "Would you like to come down and see it? You might make some further suggestions before it is too late."

She rose with alacrity, and they descended the handsome staircase arm-in-arm. All the rooms were situated on the ground floor, most of them abutting on the atrium, in the centre of which was to be erected a fountain in a colossal marble basin. The boudoir adjoined the night-nursery, and was octagonal in shape. It was decorated in white and gold, but the hangings were of old rose, Patricia's favourite hue. The furniture had just arrived, and some of the pictures already adorned the walls. One, a small oil-painting of the Thames near Chertsey, had hung in her old boudoir in Grosvenor Square, and called up a flood of old and half-forgotten memories. She sank on to the silken covered settee, whilst her husband went on a tour of inspection, and gave herself

up to a dreamy recollection of the past. How dull and prosy it had been in her father's house, and how depressing the magnificence of the silent rooms. It seemed almost impossible to believe that she had existed for so long with only the companionship of the phlegmatic Mrs. Lowther, except for the occasional visits of the Countess of Chesterwood to break the dreary monotony. What a change the advent of Lionel had been! He had transformed her life, had given a zest and interest of which she had never dreamed, had flooded her heart with the sunshine of his love. How noble he was, and brave, and good! She glanced up at his stalwart figure with shining eyes. She at least had no cause to long for the past.

"Well, what do you think of it, Patricia?" he said playfully, returning to her side. "Does it meet with your little ladyship's approval? Are you satisfied?"

"More than satisfied!" she exclaimed, with ardour. "The house will be a perfect paradise. But, do you know, Lal, it all seems unreal."

"Unreal?" he repeated, in perplexity. "How? It is substantial enough—built of stone throughout."

"Yes, I know. I didn't mean that. I cannot realise, somehow, that this is to be our own house. It is more like a fairy palace than Grosvenor Square."

Lionel laughed, well pleased.

"If this is a fairy palace, you are the fairy queen," he replied gallantly. "You shall hold your court in the atrium, and all Haifa will come and do you homage. Ah, you do not know what pleasant things are in store for you when we have established ourselves here!"

Patricia answered him with a smile, but a sigh soon took its place. This peculiar air of unreality always

affected her when she went over this new house. She could not imagine herself domestically settled in the place, and although the arrival of the furniture introduced a more home-like appearance, this feeling still remained. It was almost like a premonition—a presentiment that although the house was being built especially for her, although everything in it had been chosen in accordance with her own taste, all the care and thought had been in vain, for the simple reason that fate ordained that she should never live in it. It was so unaccountable and inexplicable that she would not mar her husband's satisfaction in the place by worrying him with this foolish fancy. But the fancy, foolish or not, remained; and the oftener they visited the house the more certain she became that the magnificent edifice would never be her home.

Having completed their inspections, they walked leisurely back to the Government House, where a surprise in the shape of Dr. Engelmacher awaited them. The good doctor was passing through Haifa *en route* for Beyrout, and intended to stay for two or three days. Knowing that the two men were anxious to talk over communal matters, Patricia left them to themselves. In the library she found Lady Montella and Raie.

Her mother-in-law looked up with a smile.

"I want to ask you something, Patricia," she said, making room for her on the couch. "Do you remember Miss Lorm?"

"Zillah Lorm," put in Raie, desiring to be more explicit. "A dark girl, with nice eyes, splendid figure, and stand-offish manner. You know her, Patricia; she sings."

"Yes, I know her," Patricia answered readily. "She is in England, is she not?"

Lady Montella referred to the letter she held in her hand.

"She was; but she will be in Haifa very soon," was her reply. "Assimilation does not seem to have agreed with her very well, and she is evidently hankering after the Jews in spite of her former desire to forget her origin. She writes that on account of a disappointment—of which she gives no particulars—she is very unhappy, and wishes to join us here for a time. As I have known her for many years, I should like to invite her to stay with us for two or three months; but I would not do so without first consulting you."

Raie made a little grimace.

"I am sure you do not want her, do you, Patricia?" she interrupted, with a comically defiant look at her aunt. "She used to be sweet on Lionel before he married you, and I know she's fearfully jealous of you even now. I don't like her a bit, and I don't know what Aunt Inez can see in her. I am sure she will come and upset us all if you invite her here."

"Hush, Raie!" said Lady Montella reprovingly. "You allow your tongue to run away with you. Miss Lorm is a very bright and nice woman, in spite of your opinion. Whether she shall be invited here or not is for Patricia to decide. What do you say, my daughter? Shall she come?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," Patricia answered promptly, but without enthusiasm. She was not anxious to play hostess to Zillah Lorm, but she was too certain of her husband's love to listen to Raie's warning. It was not in her nature to entertain that kind of fear.

CHAPTER V

THE COMING OF ZILLAH

So Miss Lorm came, and took up her abode at the Government House as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and immediately aroused Raie's anger by making great friends with the Princess; for Raie looked upon the Princess as her own especial property, and resented the addition of a third to share their walks and drives. She anticipated worse to follow, however, for the Princess, prior to her departure from Palestine, intended to visit Jerusalem, accompanied by Lionel and Patricia, so that she would be left to help Lady Montella entertain the guest. She sincerely hoped that Ferdinand would not come back until it were a thing of the past; she did not desire him to meet Zillah Lorm.

There was no denying that Zillah possessed an attractive personality, as well as a magnificent voice. She seemed to be able to draw people towards her with an almost magnetic power, and there were few who refused to be fascinated by her charms. Nevertheless, she did not improve on acquaintance, for there was a hardness in her nature which soon made itself felt. She had no sympathy with the poor and down-trodden, or with anyone whose sole aim was not success. Her one desire was to advance in the

world, and her friends were chosen in accordance with this end. And this ambition sometimes manifested itself unpleasantly in her words, for she did not seek to disguise the trait.

Strangely enough, Raie was not the only one who regarded her with dislike. Little Julian manifested a distinct animosity from the very first day of her arrival, nor was he to be propitiated by caresses and presents. He began to cry directly she spoke to him, and screamed lustily for her to go away. His parents and nurses tried every means in their power to win him over, but in vain. He would not kiss Miss Lorm, neither would he allow her to touch him ; all he could do was to look a picture of misery while she remained in the room.

He was only a baby, and his goodwill of no value at all ; but he was Montella's child, and Zillah felt piqued.

" Let me sing to him," she suggested, as the boy hid his face on his mother's shoulder. She was certain of conquering him by the dulcet tones of her voice.

But even the soothing notes of a lullaby were powerless to move the stubborn little heart. Julian fixed his round eyes on the singer for a moment, but soon looked away. Seeing that he was still obdurate, Zillah ceased in disgust ; after all, it mattered little whether he condescended to kiss her or not.

" I have never seen baby behave like that before," Patricia said, when the others had left the nursery. " I felt quite ashamed of him before Miss Lorm. How can you account for it, nurse ? "

The nurse was at a loss for a reply, but Anne Whiteside came to the rescue.

" Oh, there's no accounting for the likes and

dislikes of children, my lady," she replied easily. "I believe they can see further into a person's character than we grown-ups can ; it's a sort of second sight, I think. Now, my Tom, he's just the same. He took a dislike to the Arab boy who minds him when I'm up here, and no amount of coaxing would make him alter his mind. So all I could do was to send the boy away and get another ; it wasn't worth while making the lad ill on that account."

"Certainly not," was Patricia's comment. "It is not the least use to try and force affection. How is your grandson, by the way? I have scarcely seen him since we came to Haifa."

Nothing delighted Anne more than to discuss her boy.

"He's doing fairly well, thank you, my lady," she replied, with alacrity. "Of course, he found the heat trying at first, but he's getting used to it now."

"And is his brain more active than it was?"

"I'm afraid not, my lady ; he'll never be no better than a poor imbecile. Not that I'm complaining, though ; there's worse things than that."

"You ought to let him sleep in the Cave of Elijah, Mrs. Whiteside," advised Raie, suddenly appearing at the door. "Wouldn't it make a sensation if he were to be cured!"

"Eh, miss!" The poor woman looked bewildered. "Is it a doctor's treatment you mean?"

"No ; the Cave of Elijah." She smiled good-humouredly, not in the least realising the serious import of her words. "They say that all who are mentally diseased are cured by sleeping there over night. I suppose it's after the style of Lourdes."

"Oh! but it isn't true, surely, miss?" Her form trembled like a leaf. "It can't be true!"

"I can't swear to it, but that is what tradition says. I think it is supposed to have to do with the influence of Elijah's spirit on Mount Carmel. Mustaph, our guide at the hotel, said he actually knew someone who was cured."

"How came you to hear of it, Raie?" asked Patricia, with surprise. She was sorry the girl had mentioned it to Anne, thereby raising false hopes.

"I heard of it when I was staying with the Princess: the cave is not far from the Mount Carmel Hotel."

"And does the Princess believe in it?"

"She neither believes nor disbelieves, because it's a sort of faith-cure. When I asked her, she answered by quoting Shakespeare: '*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*' But the Carmelites evidently accept it as a fact."

"It is not well to believe too much in such superstitions," said Patricia thoughtfully. "I should advise you not to think about it, Anne."

The nurse looked from the one to the other in a tremor of excitement. "Oh, but, my lady, if it should be true! If it should be true!" she cried, scarcely able to contain herself. "Think what it would mean to me to see my Tom growing in mind and body like other boys! Think what a comfort he would be to me in my old age. Surely if the cave is so near by it would be sinful not to try it. Maybe the Lord has brought me out to the Holy Land for this very purpose, else why should it happen that I should come to this very place?"

"If faith is wanted, you will not be found lacking," her mistress said, with a sigh, as she handed her pet back to the under-nurse. "But if you are disappointed, Anne, remember that I warned you. Every country-side has its legends and superstitions. At Burstall Abbey we had a magic well."

"I am sorry I have put the poor creature in such a state of excitement," Raie said, as they left the nursery. "Surely, though, she would not be so foolhardy as to take her little boy to the cave? I would not spend a night there for all the gold of Ophir."

"Anne will do anything if she thinks it is of God," rejoined her friend, as she turned into her own room. "She seems to see the working of Providence in every event."

Dinner that evening was considerably enlivened by the presence of Zillah Lorm, for coming direct from England, she had much to tell. Owing to her connection with influential Christian people she had evaded the Assimilation Act until a few weeks ago; but her origin having been eventually discovered, she had been given the option of taking the oath or leaving the country. Indeed, it was only by the prompt action on her behalf by a friendly peer that she had escaped the penalty meted out to such defaulters. Instead of viewing her position with anything approaching repentance, however, she seemed to regard it as a good joke. She was genuinely elated at having had the cleverness to defy the authorities for so long a time.

"It was Mrs. Athelstan Moore—the Countess of Chesterwood, I mean—who found me out," she informed Lionel cheerfully. "You see, she had met me at your house and knew something about me;

the others never dreamt that I was a Jewess. Of course, I took care to avoid all those who already knew."

"I thought you had already taken the oath," said Lady Montella, from the other side of the table. "Did you not give me to understand that such was the case?"

"Did I? I have forgotten." Zillah looked up with an air of frankness. "To tell you the truth, I was very near taking it, but when it actually came to it, I couldn't find it in my heart to give up all connection with things Jewish. Not that I care much for *Yiddishkeit*—I generally try to avoid it as much as I can; but as long as I was born a Jewess, I suppose I'd better die one too."

"Was that your only reason for refusing to secede?" asked Lionel, with a curious smile. "That you might die a Jewess? Why not that you might live a Jewess too?"

Zillah gave a gesture of insouciance.

"To live is always more difficult than to die," she returned lightly. "Besides, I could not make a *Brocha*[1] over the Sabbath candles to save my life. It is not in my nature to conform to that sort of thing."

"But living in Israel, you will do as the Israelites do?"

"Certainly, as long as no great effort is expected of me. I should certainly not go out of my way to offend."

"Your candour is refreshing," said Lady Montella, scarcely knowing whether to be shocked or to admire, "and, unfortunately, your position is a common one

[1] Blessing.

amongst the Jews of to-day. So long as you do not actually renounce the faith, you, and those who adopt your standpoint, think you are fulfilling your whole duty to it. Why do you cling so ardently to the thought of dying a Jewess? Is it not because you cannot bear the thought of being separated from your own people at the last?"

"I suppose so," Miss Lorm admitted. "It is just a sentiment, or else a prick of conscience. I am not sure which."

"But our religion claims more of you than that," the elder lady returned, with a touch of reproach. "People would not have to talk of the decadence of Judaism were it not for the neglect and lack of enthusiasm shown by many Jews. How I long for a grand revival—a rekindling of Judaism as it was in the days of old! Surely it ought to take place in this sacred land of our fathers. And when so opportune a time as now!"

Her eyes deepened with an intensity of feeling, and she became lost in thought. Zillah diverted the conversation into another channel, and began to speak of English affairs. She wished her ladyship were not quite so ardent a Jewess; she could not understand it at all.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAVE OF ELIJAH

ANNE WHITESIDE was sitting in her own room, absorbed in thought, whilst near by, in his little white bed, lay her sleeping boy. Raie's words had sunk deep into her mind—so deep that she could think of nothing else. Had she been told of such a cave in England she would probably have considered it unworthy her attention, but here in Palestine the conditions were entirely of another kind. She remembered the story of the pool of Bethesda, where the great multitude of impotent folk waited for the moving of the water; and to her it seemed quite as likely for a miracle to happen in a cave as in a pool. Moreover, the very soil of Palestine was sacred, and more associated with divine interposition than any country in the world, so that it seemed to lend itself to the miraculous as a matter of course.

"With God all things are possible," she said to herself. "The arm of the Lord is not shortened." The physicians were unable to cure the lad, and had pronounced his case hopeless; but surely no case was beyond the power of the Great Physician? She was determined to have faith.

The boy awoke, and blinking sleepily at the light, glanced at his grandmother, but no ray of intelligence crossed his face. He knew her, of course—he would

take his food at the hands of no one else; but he showed no sign of recognition, and gazed vacantly into space. Anne moved the lamp in order to prevent the glare from hurting his eyes, then fetched him a glass of fresh cocoanut milk. He drank it greedily, and asked for more, but the old nurse thought he had had sufficient, and coaxed him to try and sleep.

Sitting by the bed, she sang a crooning little melody, such as might be used to lull a baby in a cradle, whilst her fingers busily plied a pair of woollen socks. There was no sound to break the stillness but that of her own voice, yet she was quite oblivious of the gentle lifting of the latch. A sudden shadow on the opposite wall, however, caused her to look up suddenly, and without any sense of surprise she discovered a swarthy Arab at her side.

"Mustaph!" she exclaimed, putting down her needles in haste. "You have come from the Princess? What does her Highness say?"

For answer he produced a note from the folds of his inner garment and handed it with a bow. The nurse took it with trembling fingers and broke the seal. Then she adjusted her spectacles and turned towards the light. Mustaph complacently squatted on the floor.

> "*I think your project considerably fraught with risk both to the boy and yourself*," it ran; "*but if you are determined to venture, I will not deter you. To-morrow will be a good opportunity on account of the full moon, and my carriage will be at your disposal. Be ready an hour and a half before sunset, when one of my servants shall call. Please*

inform Mustaph if this arrangement is satisfactory, or if you have changed your mind. Personally, I should advise you to leave well alone rather than be guided by a Mohammedan superstition. O. von Felsen-Schvoenig."

To read and digest the note took some little time; but the Arabs are never in a hurry, and Mustaph waited with calm patience. Anne sank on to a chair, with her back to the man and her elbows resting on the pillows of the bed. 'To be, or not to be?' that was the question which sent a thrill of agitation through her being. Whether it were better for Tom to remain as he was—a helpless imbecile—or to undergo the chance of being cured. Cured! The very word set all her pulses throbbing, and made the blood course rapidly through her veins. To have his intellect restored, to be clothed and in his right mind, like the demoniac of old, to be a help and a comfort instead of the burden he ever remained! For she knew he was a burden, in spite of the assurances she always gave herself to the contrary. His condition necessitated more attention than she was ever able to give him, even though he was watched by some obliging friend when she was away. Cured! As in a vision she saw him growing up beside her, his form no longer delicate and shrunken, but strong and stalwart with the vigour of youth; his face glowing with intelligence instead of that vacant expression which seemed to cleave her heart in twain. If he were but healthy like other boys, her life would be a very paradise on earth, for it but needed this to complete her happiness. A mist rose before her eyes as she gazed at the poor old-young face, the

large forehead which betokened not intellect but idiocy, the heavy eyelids closed in sleep.

"Oh, Christ, dear Lord, help me!" she whispered, clasping her hands in an agony of indecision. She knew not what to do for the best.

Mustaph, noticing her agitation, rose from the floor and approached with wonder.

"*Malaish!*" he exclaimed, using the Arab term of condolence. "What matter? *Mafish.* There is nothing."

"The cave," she said, raising her head. "The Cave of Elijah. You have been there. Is it true that people are cured?"

He stared at her interrogatively, scarcely understanding her words.

"*Fen*—where? The cave? Boy go? *Haiwa.* Yes, varry good."

Then he nodded vigorously, meaning to say that he knew all about it now.

"Tell her Highness I have made up my mind to try with Tom," Anne said, deciding suddenly. "I will be ready at the time she says—before sunset. But I suppose I had better write it."

And finding a pencil, she scribbled the message on the reverse side of the Princess's note. She felt as if she had cast the die.

Nodding and smiling, the Arab departed, and she was left to herself again. The boy was still asleep, with a look almost of babyhood on his face. If he suffered in any way by his visit to the cave she was certain she would never forgive herself; but the temptation to make the trial was too great to be passed by.

"You will be cured, Tom!" she exclaimed softly,

as she bent down and kissed him on the forehead. "I know you will; I can feel it in my heart. No more weary hours, no more pain, dearest. Oh, to see you no longer suffering! 'Tis worth the trial of faith!"

She paced the room, scarcely able to contain her deeply-stirred emotions, and without the least inclination for rest. And when she did go to bed, sleep refused to come, so that she tossed the whole night through, and longed for daylight. But she was up again at the usual early hour, and fulfilled her duties with no lack of energy. Fearing to receive discouragement, she did not inform the Montellas of her intention to put the matter to the test that night, and only the Princess, to whom she had rendered some service in Haifa, was in the secret. Punctual to the appointed time the car appeared before her door, with two servants in attendance, and fortunately there were few people about to wonder at its coming. Anne's heart beat fast as she placed the lad in the most comfortable seat, and took up her position beside him. The cee-spring and thick rubber tires on the wheels of the vehicle minimised the jolting, which would otherwise have rendered the drive more or less unpleasant, and the white awning served to protect the occupants from the glare of the sun. Occasionally a string of soft-treading camels passed them, their sweetly-sounding bells announcing their approach; or the peasant-women in their picturesque blue robes would stand and stare at them, perhaps in the hope of selling some of the milk which they carried in pans on their heads. The road on the mountain side lay between rich and beautiful vineyards, and as they ascended a glorious view

expanded before their gaze. Northwards sparkled the waters of the bay, across which, at a distance of about twelve miles, lay Akka, once in the coasts of the Gentiles, but now a Jewish town. Eastwards rose the hills of Galilee, whose undulating ranges overlooked Nazareth, Cana, and the Sacred Lake; and far away in the distance towered the snowy cap of Hermon, like the only cloud in a clear sky. Around them was spread the rich flora of the Carmel ridge, with occasional Druze villages nestling on its slopes; and close at hand the happy twittering of the birds fell on the fragrant air. Anne drew a deep breath of enjoyment, feeling that here—so close to the scene of Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal—nothing was impossible. The very atmosphere seemed charged with the miraculous, the Oriental colouring bridged over the distance from that time of old. It was the first time she had been any distance from the town, the first time that she was able to realise that this was in truth the land of the Bible; and the fascination of it all crept over her spirit—that peculiar spell of the Holy Land.

The Princess was waiting for them when they arrived at the hotel. It was characteristic of her to treat her inferiors with as much deference as her equals, and since the nurse had obtained the promise of this favour, she would not stint the measure of her goodwill. A substantial repast had been prepared for them in her private sitting-room; and with her own hands she ministered to their wants. Yet if at home in Felsen-Schvoenig her husband had asked for such an attention, she would have replied that she was not a serving-maid. She was indeed a mixture of perversity, but a sweet woman withal.

"Tom does not look so well to-day," she observed, as she coaxed him to eat. "Do you think the journey has been too much for him, Anne?"

Anne was not sure, but she thought he must have benefited by the lovely drive.

"If your Highness will allow me to feed him, I think he will get on better," she suggested cheerfully, and held the spoon to his lips as though he had been a child.

The meal over, they re-entered the little carriage, and prepared to start for the wonderful cave. Standing under the stone portico, the Princess wished them farewell.

"I shall think of you to-night," she said, with a smile of encouragement. "I hope the cure will work."

"If God will," was the nurse's rejoinder. "I thank your Highness for the great help you have given me."

But the Princess would not receive her gratitude.

"I will send the carriage for you at dawn," she called out, as the coachman took up the reins; and then again wishing luck to the venture, she disappeared from view.

The cave, which was formed out of the limestone of which the mountain was composed, was reached shortly after leaving the hotel. A chapel had been built there to commemorate the place, but it had been done away with when the Jews came into possession, and now there existed nothing to distinguish it from other caves. Coming into it from the open air, it seemed to exhale an atmosphere of warm humidity, and the walls, when Anne felt them, were quite damp. Mustaph had brought with him a lamp, some warm blankets, and a small folding-chair,

but in spite of these commodities, the place scarcely promised to be a comfortable one in which to spend the night. The shadows gathered as they made their preparations, and the nurse shivered, though scarcely with cold. Even Tom, who scarcely ever displayed an emotion of any kind, seemed frightened, and at first refused to lie down in the strange floor-bed allotted to him. At sunset Mustaph took off his shoes, spread his mat, and said his prayers in approved Mohammedan fashion, after which he took up his position on guard at the mouth of the cave. The lighted lamp brought with it a homely ray of comfort, but it was too small to adequately illumine the cavern, and the corners were dark and black. Amidst such eerie surroundings, Anne would not have been surprised at any apparition or super-natural manifestation, and as the time wore on, she worked herself up to an intense pitch of excitement. Tom lay awake for several hours with wide-open, frightened eyes, his hands clutching tightly at the counterpane, whilst in his own way he expressed his disapproval and fear. At last, however, his hands unclosed and his features relaxed, and closing his eyes wearily, he dropped off to sleep.

Anne heaved a trembling sigh as she sank on to her knees at his side. Who could tell what would have happened by the time he awoke again? Crossing her hands on her breast to still the rapid beating of her heart, she sent up a passionate entreaty to Heaven to grant her prayers for the boy. What would she not do to show her gratitude if only he were cured of his disease! How devoted her life would be to the Most High henceforth! She was not the first soul who has presumed to bribe the

Almighty when in distress: it is a common human instinct to think that we can gain a divine benefaction by promising to do something great and magnanimous in return.

The silence was intense, but suddenly it was broken by a weird and melancholy sound. The nurse started in affright, wondering from whence it came, and listened with distended eyes. Moving towards the entrance, she called to Mustaph, who was endeavouring to rouse himself from sleep, whilst the sound continued, just like a cry of woe.

"A jackal," the Arab replied imperturbably. "*Malaish*—never mind. I tell him *imshi*—be off! *La!* no. He not come here. Ma'am not be afraid. He only howl."

Anne was thankful to hear the sound of a human voice.

"I wish the night were over," she said, with a sigh. "Tom is fast asleep. Are you sure we have done everything properly? I am so anxious. I cannot sleep."

Mustaph suppressed a yawn.

"Allah is good!" he exclaimed wearily. "Ma'am must sleep, or else Elijah not come. To stay awake is *harâm*—forbidden. I tell jackal *imshi*. Ma'am sleep."

So Anne returned to the interior of the cave, and wrapping herself in a blanket, tried to fulfil the command. The howling and whimpering of the jackals continued for some time, but she covered her ears, and did her best to shut out the sound. She was, indeed, very tired, and since it was necessary that she should sleep, she was determined not to keep awake. Gradually she lost consciousness, until the cheerless

cave entirely disappeared, to be replaced by a phantomatic but more happy slumberland. The night wore on, but nothing happened to disturb her dreams, and she slept right on until a strip of light in the east heralded the dawn. Then she awoke with a start to find her two companions still asleep, the Arab in his place at the mouth of the cave. Pulling herself together, she rose and stretched wearily, and then bent over her beloved grandchild. He was lying in the same position, but so still that he might have been a waxen figure instead of a human boy. With an indefinable sense of alarm she knelt down beside him, and scarcely knowing what she was doing, felt his heart and his wrist. Then a low cry of anguish echoed and re-echoed through the silence of the cavern—the cry of a broken-hearted woman.

For the light of her life had been extinguished—the boy was quite dead!

She remained in her kneeling position, totally stunned. It was possible that lying on the floor the damp vapours had poisoned him, but it did not occur to her yet to seek the cause; it mattered not how he died, since there was no hope of his instantaneous resurrection. But while she knelt, her eyes blinded with tears, there appeared before her mind's eye something which was almost akin to a vision. The cave in which she had slept for so many hours became the rock-hewn sepulchre of Mary and Martha's brother, and in fancy she heard the sweet but authoritative Voice: "*Lazarus, come forth!*" Oh, that that same Voice might utter the command over the inanimate figure of her boy! But no, that Voice spake no longer, save in the souls of men. Of a different nature, though no less potent, were the miracles of to-day.

"'*He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever'!*" she quoted, in a whisper, as her lips touched the ice-cold forehead of the lad. She had prayed that he might be cured, that he might spend no more weary hours, and have no more pain. Ought she not to be happy since God in His own way had cured the child? Certain it was that for him there would be no more suffering and weariness. "'*Even length of days for ever and ever'!*" she repeated, as she went to inform the Arab.

She was no longer sorrowful. The boy was cured at last!

CHAPTER VII

EL KÛDS

JERUSALEM—that much-coveted city of quarrels—was still under Moslem rule. The Jews—to whom it was as the golden heart of their country—had done all in their power to possess it, but the Sultan was obdurate, and had only bartered Palestine on the condition that El Kûds—the Holy—should be extra-territorialised. So the rivalry between the Greeks, Latins, Protestants, Armenians, Copts and Mohammedans continued. But the Jews stood on a firmer footing than heretofore; and if secretly they looked upon the *Harâm* with covetous eyes, seeing behind the Mosque of Omar the dome of their own Temple, they kept their secret well. The Zionist leaders had impressed upon their minds the need of maintaining friendly relations with their rivals; and they were urged to treat the Christian sacred places with due respect, in order to show that they were as capable as the Mohammedans of guarding them intact, if ever opportunity should occur. That the opportunity would occur some day, was to them a foregone conclusion; for however long and weary the waiting, they were certain that Jerusalem would eventually be theirs.

Dr. Engelmacher's house was situated in the south-eastern suburb of the town, adjoining the Jewish

quarter. Montella and his wife and child—who were to be the doctor's guests—arrived late on a Friday afternoon, just before the falling of the Sabbath. They had travelled from Haifa to Jaffa by boat, and then on to Jerusalem by train, for the new railway between the two capitals was not yet completed. Engelmacher received them with a breezy cordiality which immediately put them at their ease; and his wife, a typical German frau, busied herself greatly concerning their comfort. Little Julian, who had come in the care of the faithful Anne, was installed in a pretty room transformed into a nursery for the occasion. Mrs. Engelmacher had no children of her own, her only little one having died in infancy. Perhaps that was why she had begged Lady Patricia to bring hers: she longed for the sound of a childish voice.

To the true Jew there is no happier hour than that of a calm Sabbath eve. Having rid himself of the turmoil of his daily labour, he dons his best garb to meet the Bride of the Sabbath. The Friday night supper is in itself an institution; and the ceremonial candles, the sweet wine and cloth-covered bread, serve as links to unite him to his brethren throughout the world. So felt Dr. Engelmacher, as with his velvet cap well set on his head, he intoned the Hebrew grace. To him the Sabbath had but one disadvantage: he could not smoke, for as to touch fire is forbidden, his well-beloved briar had to be laid aside until on the following evening three stars appeared in the sky. But he made the sacrifice cheerfully, even if he sometimes grumbled about it to his wife. His motto with regard to his religion was "*Noblesse oblige.*" The more was it to be

appreciated in that it cost something to be a Jew.

"Your wife is a picture!" he exclaimed to his guest, when a little while later Patricia, on the plea of fatigue, excused herself and retired to rest. "Himmel! what eyes! One can look right through them to her soul. But she is a thorough English-woman. How likes she the foreign life?"

"Very well, I think," Montella replied, with a contented smile. "She would make herself happy anywhere with me; she is only unhappy when she thinks she disappoints me in not doing the proper thing in accordance with Jewish law."

"Then she is conscientious?"

"Yes, very; it is her nature. She is the sort of girl who would be happy in any country and under any conditions so long as she thought she was doing the right thing. She is the dearest little woman in the world!"

"Little, do you call her?" said Mrs. Engelmacher, who was short and plump. "*Um Gotteswillen*, if she is little, I must be a pigmy. She is tall and graceful, such as one reads of. If I were a man I should be proud of such a wife—eh, Max?"

"Ach well, perhaps." The good doctor pinched her cheek affectionately, knowing what she desired. "For myself I prefer a small wife, because she takes up less room in a house, and you can put her in your pocket if there is nowhere else for her to go. Besides, I like to see a dear Yiddishë *ponim*[1] at my side. It would not do for us all to fall in love with fair and beautiful Christians. Where would Judaism be?"

He laughed heartily, and so did Montella, who was

[1] Countenance.

too sensible to take offence. And so the evening passed, enlivened by anecdotes and jokes, until Mrs. Engelmacher also said good-night. Left to themselves, the two men entered upon a more serious conversation, for in connection with the Rabbinical faction there was much to be discussed. Ben Yetzel had openly declared antagonism towards any kind of reform, and in doing so had practically thrown down the glove.

"He came back from Haifa with his hands raised in holy horror," Engelmacher said, in his short, dry accents. "According to him the city is a veritable hot-bed of heresy. He saw with his very own eyes a Jewish man carrying a walking-stick on the Sabbath; and the strange thing about it was that the heavens did not fall!"

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed the young man, with contempt. "It is a wonder he will consent to carry his clothes."

"Well, you know he wears his pocket-handkerchief tied round his knee as a garter because it would be a sin to carry it in his pocket on the Sabbath. But there is worse to follow. He went to your house to dinner in spite of his misgiving as to the orthodoxy of your menage, and your wife actually offered him milk in his coffee thirty minutes after he had partaken of meat! After that he has given you all up as hopeless; and really, my dear Montella, I think you might have exercised greater care!"

"My wife offered him milk in his coffee!" repeated Lionel incredulously. "I can scarcely believe it. My mother was in the room, and would surely have noticed it; she is quite as particular in that way as Ben Yetzel himself."

"But how is it there was milk on the tray at all so soon after dinner?"

"Because my wife and Miss Emanuel seldom eat meat. They find that light food agrees with them better in this climate. Of course, Patricia, who finds it difficult to realise the importance of the dietary laws, *might* unthinkingly have passed him the milk. It is a great pity, especially as Ben Yetzel is such a fanatic. But I dare not say anything to her about it; she would be very grieved at her mistake."

"Oh, it isn't worth while to rake up the matter now," said the doctor, relapsing into his native tongue. "The question is, are we to bow down to Ben Yetzel or not? Years ago, when I was threshing out the Zionist question, I thought what a glorious thing national Judaism would be, but I left the narrowness of Rabbinical Judaism quite out of account. In this new State, it seems to me, as to my contemporaries, that we should let every man find salvation in his own particular way.[1] How can we, who have suffered so much on account of religious persecution, afford to deny toleration to our own brethren? Let every man do that which seems right according to his own conscience, thereby abolishing the secret hypocrisy which is so detestable to an honest soul. To enforce orthodoxy as Ben Yetzel would do is absolute madness; it will simply mean the cramping and narrowing down of all the best that is in us; it will mean the practical ruin of the State."

"And yet you are an orthodox Jew yourself?"

"I am. Use is second nature, you know, and I am willing to try and set a good example. But I am a

[1] Dr. Herzl's principle.

broad-minded man of the world, and I know that that world does not end at my own horizon. People of different temperaments need various forms, even of the same religion. It is impossible for an Englishman like yourself, for instance, to beat your breast like the Polish Jew."

Montella nodded. "You are a sensible man, doctor," he said, with enthusiasm. "But what do you advise?"

"I hardly know. The bulk of the people in Palestine are with Ben Yetzel to a man. It is only the few emancipated, deep-thinking men like ourselves who have any thought of rebellion. For the present we must just watch and wait to see how things go. You will see Ben Yetzel, of course, while you are here?"

"My people in Haifa expect it of me. I suppose I must."

"Then be careful what you say to him. He is an adept at catching one in one's words. He loves to condemn people out of their own mouths; it is a form of amusement in which he delights."

"You may rely on me to be discreet," returned Montella, with a smile. "I can be as stolid as the Sphinx when I please."

They parted for the night, and the young man went to his room with a light step. To his surprise he found Patricia still half dressed, her willowy figure enveloped in a loose silken wrapper. Sitting with her elbows resting on the ledge of the open casement, she looked like some frail sprite in the light of the moon. Montella went up to her, and tenderly touched the loosened tendrils of her hair.

"I thought you were in bed long ago, sweet," he said.

She turned towards him with an affectionate gesture. "I have been talking to Anne," was her reply. "It is just a month since her grandchild died. She seemed very much upset about it, poor woman, and I think it has done her good to tell me. I have been trying to console her."

"At the expense of your beauty sleep?"

"I do not feel inclined for sleep; I am not so tired as I was an hour ago."

"But you must sleep, or you will be fit for nothing to-morrow," he urged gently. "What were you gazing at so intently out of the window?"

"Jerusalem!" she replied, and the words fell almost musically from her lips. "I look through this casement window, and I see the city stretched out before me, with its white domes and flat roofs, and a kind of spell comes over me as I gaze. See how solitary it looks, surrounded by those savage hills, and yet it is the centre of the three great religions of the world, and the goal of pilgrims from the uttermost ends of the earth. Even I, who am neither a Jewess by birth nor scarcely a Christian by faith, cannot help feeling thrilled. Eight times destroyed, it has come through fire and blood, and still remains; even Rome cannot boast of such a record as this."

Montella smiled.

"What a fascinating goddess Jerusalem is!" he exclaimed softly. "She intoxicates us all when we first come within her walls; but you will find that the charm will wear off when you have been here a few days. A bird's-eye view of the city is more satisfactory, I think, than a closer inspection. She doesn't improve on acquaintance, for beneath her apparently peaceful exterior, there rises the humbug

of her ecclesiastical show-places, the wrangle of creeds. When you have seen all the sights of the place, you will find that your pleasing sensations have gradually evaporated. At least, that was my experience on my first visit here."

"You are more matter-of-fact than I am," she rejoined, almost reproachfully. "I am sure that to me Jerusalem will always remain the same."

She closed the casement and turned away, a thoughtful expression in her eyes. She could not imagine why the sight of the city should raise such emotions in her, since she was not bound to it by ties either of race or faith. She was always moved by places of historic interest, it was true, and she remembered how greatly she had been stirred by her first view of the seven hills of Rome ; but Jerusalem impressed her in an entirely different way, and one which she could not so easily explain. She had looked forward with no especial pleasure to her sojourn in the Holy City, and had come merely because her husband wished it. Now, however, her feeling was one of inexplicable delight. She would not have missed the visit for the world.

CHAPTER VIII

AMID THE SACRED SCENES

THE Princess Charles von Felsen-Schvoenig was also in Jerusalem, but she stayed at a hospice in the Christian quarter, where a friendly bishop and two or three other English Christians were included among the guests. In a fortnight's time she would be *en route* for the Rhenish principality where her husband was patiently awaiting her return, but at the present moment her one desire was to "do" Jerusalem thoroughly, and in this she succeeded fairly well. Armed with Baedeker's guide, she called at Dr. Engelmacher's house for Lady Patricia, and chartering a light *arabiyeh*, drove wherever the streets would permit. The influence of the British Consul and Turkish Governor, combined with an unlimited amount of *backsheesh*, gained admittance to the innermost courts of the *Harâm*, and most effectually paved the way to the various places of interest. But the enjoyment of the Princess was somewhat marred by her inherent scepticism. She refused to believe in many cases that certain events happened on the exact spots to which they were ascribed, and therefore the great fascination of them was lost. For the city itself she possessed the deepest reverence; indeed it was this very reverence which made the morbid hallowing of certain rocks and stones so repugnant to her mind. Descended

from a strictly Puritanical race, she found it impossible to manifest enthusiasm for relics—so many of them spurious — and the numerous mementoes sold by avaricious Moslems. The fanaticism of some of the Latins and Greeks was to her as incomprehensible as it was revolting.

She was obliged to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by herself; for Patricia, being nominally a Jewess, was not permitted to enter the sacred precincts. So she left her friend in the little *arabiyeh* to meditate on the ambiguity of her position, and descended to the paved quadrangle alone. After what seemed a very long time she returned, thankful to be out again in the fresh air.

"Well?" said Patricia, with a smile, as she made room for her in the carriage. "Did it come up to your expectations?"

"Yes—and no," the Princess replied, sitting down with relief. "To me the chapels are tawdry in the extreme, and the building enclosing the Holy Sepulchre is a miracle of bad taste. But to see the adoration of the pilgrims is wonderful; what a pity that the place has been desecrated by so much bloodshed! I wish you could come with me next time I go."

"Impossible," returned her friend, as the vehicle pursued its way. "I should be drawn and quartered by the mob. You forget that I am to all intents and purposes a Jewess."

"Ridiculous!"

"But I am," the girl insisted, as though trying to convince herself; "otherwise I could not be Lionel's wife."

"And you are happy?"

"As Lionel's wife, yes. As a Jewess, no. Fortunately, my husband's love is more than compensation for the difficulty I find in his religion."

"Then, by your experience, mixed marriages are a success?"

"Yes, where there is such love as ours. Of course I cannot help wishing sometimes that we were one in our faith, especially for the sake of the child."

"But you are one in your faith!" exclaimed the Princess, with surprise. "Have you not become a Jewess? By your own confession you had no cherished belief to renounce at the time of your apostasy—excuse the word."

Patricia sighed, but was silent, scarcely liking to give voice to her thoughts. They had just passed through the Jaffa gate on the road to Bethlehem, and the magnificent view attracted their attention. Wild mountains stretched above them, varied by occasional vineyards and olive plantations; and a bend in the road disclosed that which was said to be Rachel's tomb.

The stone streets of Bethlehem were so narrow that the carriage occupied almost all the available space. Their destination was, of course, the Church of the Nativity, which stands at the upper end of the market-place. Passing through the low and narrow doorway, they descended to the sacred crypt, where about fifty exquisite lamps hung from the roof. On the pavement below one of the altars a metal star had been let into the rock; it indicated the exact spot where the Holy Babe was born.

"This, I believe, is authentic," said the Princess, as she bent down to read the Latin inscription on the star: "'*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*' Can you realise that this is the very cave—the

outhouse of the khân—in which the greatest event recorded in history occurred? Is it not wonderful! The thought almost takes my breath away!"

Had she been a pilgrim and emotional, she would have knelt and kissed the star. As it was, she stood by the altar with reverently bent head, her thoughts concentrated on the stupendous miracle which had been enacted there. In the adjoining church of the Latins the choir were singing vespers; and their voices, subdued by distance, rose and fell in pleasant rhythm; but within the cave itself there was silence, and the solemnity of the moment was undisturbed.

A deep sigh from her friend recalled her to the present, and with a last look at the star she turned away. To Patricia the sight of Bethlehem was like a silent reproach. It recalled with almost vivid clearness the many Christmas Days of her childhood, and how thoroughly she had entered into the spirit of the Festival; for she had been a Christian then. She was silent as they re-entered their little carriage and were driven onwards towards the village of Bêt Sahûr; and the Princess also seemed to have little to say. Their destination this time was the field "where shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground"; and arrived there they alighted to stroll among the olive groves. Near by, the Field of Boaz brought to their minds the charming idyll of Ruth the gleaner, and they could almost imagine the sweet Hebrew maiden gathering the ears of corn. Gazing down the slopes, they could see far away in the distance the brilliant waters of the Dead Sea; above them was the still deeper blue of the Syrian sky.

"This is heavenly!" exclaimed the Princess, as she flung herself down on the dry turf. "It only needs

the music of Handel's Pastoral Symphony to complete the scene. The very atmosphere seems to breathe peace."

"I did not think you could be so enthusiastic," said Patricia, with a smile. "I thought you were one of the *nil admirari* kind."

"So I am—sometimes; it's just how I feel. Nature appeals to me much more than the showy buildings wrought by the hand of man. Do you know, I made a splendid resolution when we were in the little crypt of the Nativity. I believe Palestine is making me good. I suppose you think I can do with it, Pat?" she added, with a naïve smile.

Patricia glanced at her curiously.

"I don't know," she returned honestly. "I believe your heart is in the right place, and I know you wouldn't hurt a fly if you could help it. But you might be kinder to a certain person, you know."

"My husband? Yes. It is concerning him that I have made the resolution. Of course he is rather stupid, but I suppose he can't help it, and I'm afraid I did treat him rather badly. You see he always let me squash him; and he is so delicate that it made me feel mean—as if I had thrown a stone at a child. If he had placed himself on the defensive, I should not have minded in the least. But if I smote him on one cheek, he would turn the other to me also; and no woman could stand that."

"Why smite him at all?" asked Patricia pertinently. "Is it not better to live in peace?"

"Ye—es; but if you were shut up in that grim old castle at Felsen-Schvoenig with an invalid husband, I believe even your sweet temper would be tried. However, I promised God in that little cave of the

Nativity that I would go home and try and make Karl a better wife. I haven't the least idea what made me think of Karl just then; his figure seemed to rise up and reproach me when I was looking at the star."

"It is an excellent resolution," said her friend, as she gazed thoughtfully over the Shepherds' Field to the distant hills. "Strange that you should have to come all the way to Palestine to make it. I believe there is something in this atmosphere which stirs us up to spiritual action; I felt it directly we came to Jerusalem. You would not think it to look at me, would you?—but I am as worried as I can possibly be."

The Princess looked up sharply, with an expression of surprise.

"Worried?" she repeated. "Why?"

Patricia pulled up the grass with nervous energy.

"I don't know if I am wise to talk about it," she rejoined slowly; "but I think I can trust you, Olive. I said a little while ago that I was a Jewess. The statement was false; I am not a Jewess."

"No? Well, I never thought you were. What need is there to worry yourself about that?"

"Ah, you do not understand." She threw away the blade of grass, and pressed her hands together. "I am living, spiritually, a double life, deceiving others as well as myself. I thought at the time of my marriage that it was quite easy to renounce Christianity; and indeed it was then—my soul must have been in a comatose condition. But since I have come to Jerusalem, all is changed. These sacred scenes have revived within me the faith of my childhood; almost every stone reminds me of the Master I have denied. It is impossible for one who has

ever been a Christian to gaze on the Holy City unmoved. Even you have come under the influence of this wonderful place."

"Yes, that is true. In London and New York one does not seem to have time or the inclination to trouble oneself about religion, but here Christianity is so very real. I understand your frame of mind exactly. It was absurd to ever expect you to conform to Jewish law."

"Lady Montella does expect me to conform to the Jewish law," Patricia continued seriously. "She is always impressing upon me that I have become a Jewess, and until now I have constantly reminded myself of the fact. Situated as he is, Lionel *must* have a Jewish wife. That is why I am so greatly troubled. I can no longer pretend to be what I am not."

"But you must!" exclaimed the Princess forcibly. "Since you have married a Jew, you must abide by the consequence. I believe I know your people better than you know them yourself. It will never do for them to find out that you have relapsed—that there is a heretic within the fold. You must exercise tact and discretion: learn to be a diplomatist."

"Learn to be a hypocrite, you mean. It will be a hard lesson! I am afraid I shall never master it. After all, what does it matter to the Montellas what I privately believe so long as I respect their Judaism? Will it not be better to make a clean breast of it, and tell them at once?"

"Tell them if you like, but do not say that I failed to warn you. I am older than you, Patricia, and have seen more of the world. Religion was never meant to disturb domestic happiness, and break up a home. Openly declare your faith, and you can no

longer remain in Palestine. You yourself said that Lionel must have a Jewish wife."

The coachman was growing impatient, and seeing that he wished to return, they bade good-bye to the Shepherds' Field. The homeward drive was made almost in silence, for Patricia was too much disturbed to speak. She knew that her friend's view was a correct one, and that to confess her newly-recovered faith would cause an open breach. And to leave Palestine would mean separation from the two dear ones to whom she was bound by the most sacred ties. The thought was too terrible to be borne.

"I must keep silence!" she said to herself. "I must!" But she knew that at any time her secret might escape, and she would be lost.

She went back with the Princess to supper, in accordance with the arrangement they had made before they started on their expedition; but she was poor company that night. The conversation of the guests in the hospice rolled past her like a distant echo; and even the epigrams of the Bishop (who was noted for his wit) failed to dispel her troubled thoughts. She was glad when Lionel came for her and took her home—although "home" at present was Dr. Engelmacher's house. She nestled her head against his shoulder in the little *arabiyeh*, and closed her eyes in dreamy satisfaction. His very presence imbued her with a sense of protection, and drove away the worry—at least temporarily—from her mind.

"Don't let me be away from you for a whole day again, darling," she said, in what he always called the "baby" voice. "Olive is the dearest woman I know, but I want you. I seem to have been parted from you for ages—positively *ages!*" And then she laughed in order to drive away a tear.

CHAPTER IX

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

MONTELLA and the Rabbi Ben Yetzel had quarrelled, in spite of Dr. Engelmacher's warning. It was a great pity, because Ben Yetzel was a dangerous man to offend ; but his decision on certain matters had been so arbitrary that Montella could not help protesting, and the discussion had led to hot words on either side. Engelmacher, knowing that to overthrow the Rabbinical authority altogether was bad policy on Lionel's part, endeavoured to make peace between them, but in vain. The young Governor of Haifa declared that he would sell his conscience in bondage to no man, were he priest or peasant ; and determined to use his own judgment in matters pertaining to the people. So the incensed Chief Rabbi literally shook off the dust of Engelmacher's courtyard from his feet, and departed in great wrath, calling down in the choicest Hebrew the vengeance of Heaven on all concerned.

" You have done wrong, my boy," said the doctor to Lionel in the calm which followed the storm. " It is never wise to make an enemy, especially such a man as Ben Yetzel. ' An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ' is his motto. I am afraid he will make you suffer for what you have said to-day. He holds the majority of the Palestinian Jews in the hollow of his hand."

"Even if it is so, I could not have spoken otherwise," rejoined the young man, his eyes still flashing with the intensity of his outraged feelings. "Ben Yetzel must do his worst. One generally has to suffer for right and truth in this world, I find."

"H'm, perhaps so." The doctor applied a match to his pipe. "But as 'this world'—as you so contemptuously call it—is the only one with which we have to do, I think we ought to jog along with as few jars as possible. However, what's done is done, and you will have to make the best of it. Be on your guard against Ben Yetzel—that's all. He will never forget that he owes you a grudge."

"He is welcome to pay me back whensoever he pleases," Montella said carelessly.

He was too young and too strong to cherish the smallest fear.

Nevertheless he knew that the quarrel was to be regretted. He had come to Jerusalem, hoping to improve matters by the aid of diplomacy, and had failed. It was perhaps that the English method of handling such affairs did not work in Palestine; but he could not help that—he was British to the backbone. What he said he meant with his whole heart, and the foreign system of prevarication and petty quibbling was to him as distasteful as it was unintelligible. Therefore it was impossible for him to tolerate the slippery dealings of Ben Yetzel and his clan; a breach had been inevitable from the first.

"We may as well return to Haifa as soon as the Princess leaves," he said to his wife, when he had given vent to his indignation. "I can do no good here, I am afraid."

Patricia looked up at him with her blue eyes full of sympathy.

"Poor boy!" she exclaimed softly. "You always seem to be in hot water with these rabbis. They remind me of the Pharisees of old."

"They are Pharisees—and hypocrites," he returned, with a touch of bitterness. "However, I am not going to trouble about them; they are not worth it. I shall try to take a leaf out of Engelmacher's book: instead of getting angry with them he simply laughs."

"That is the most sensible way. How many quarrels would be averted if we could only laugh!" She sighed, and added regretfully: "I shall be sorry to leave Jerusalem. It is the most wonderful little city in the world."

She would not tell him how much she dreaded the return to Haifa, but the fact remained. Here, in Mrs. Engelmacher's house, she had been comparatively free from the obligations of the Jewish ceremonial, but when she took up the domestic reins once more, the responsibility would again devolve upon her shoulders. Lady Montella had been careful to train her in the right way, and hitherto she had responded with a certain degree of enthusiasm; indeed, she had been so anxious to do the correct thing that she had sometimes done more than was absolutely necessary. Now all was changed. She felt that she could no longer show spontaneity in the duties of a Jewish housewife, even though she meant to perform them conscientiously for her husband's sake; and she feared the keenly perceptive powers of her mother-in-law, who almost seemed able to read one's thoughts. The Premier's

words to her on her wedding-day recurred with new and added force. She had thought so lightly of her apostasy at the time; she could see the reprehensibility and gravity of her action now.

It was Sunday afternoon—their last Sunday in Jerusalem—and she had promised to go to the hospice for tea. The Engelmachers were expecting friends in the evening, and she was not sorry to obtain leave of absence; but her husband, on whose account the company had been invited, was obliged to remain. She found the Princess in the pretty hospice drawing-room surrounded by a little group of admirers, whilst a good-looking curate from Devonshire obligingly handed round the tea.

The scene was in marked contrast to the glaring Orientalism without. Patricia felt as if she had been suddenly transported to a homely English vicarage, and experienced an indefinable sense of comfort at the thought. The Bishop was in the midst of one of his innumerable anecdotes, and was dilating on the humorous vagaries of a certain Scotch gillie; but he paused at the most interesting point of the story in order to fetch the new-comer a chair.

"Sit down here, Lady Patricia," he said genially. "You will be able to get a breath of air from the window."

And then he resumed his account of the golf-loving Tammas, to the amusement, if not the edification of his friendly audience.

"We are all going to St. George's this evening," the Princess informed her, when a momentary lull in the conversation occurred. "You don't mind coming, do you, Pat? The Bishop has been asked to preach."

"I shall be very glad," the girl answered promptly. "It is such a long, long time since I went to church; I have almost forgotten what the service is like. But I wonder if Lionel would object? I hardly like to go without his knowledge."

The Princess looked dubious.

"I should think he is too broad-minded to object," she said thoughtfully. "However, you must do just as you like; I don't want Lionel to tell me that I have led you astray."

"Oh, he wouldn't do that," returned Patricia quickly, wondering how she should decide. There was an uneasy sensation at the back of her mind, that in her present position she ought not to attend a Christian church; but the desire to form one of the party conquered. After all, she was acquainted with so few people in Jerusalem that it was very improbable that she would meet anyone she knew. But she made up her mind to tell her husband that same night; she had no wish to act clandestinely.

They set out just as the bells began to ring, the Devonian curate in attendance. Passing through the Damascus Gate, they paused at El Hieremîyeh—the "green hill far away, without a city wall," which some believed, with General Gordon, to be the true Calvary, in preference to the site within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Certain it was that the caves on the southern side gave it the appearance of "the place which is called the place of a skull"; and it was the Jews' traditional place of execution. Below was a garden, containing a rock-hewn sepulchre, which might well have been the "new tomb" belonging to Joseph of Arimathea; but by some it was said to be fifth-century work, and its authenticity

was open to question. To the Princess it seemed well that the exact locality of the Great Redemption should never be decided; for the place was surely too sacred to be desecrated by the wrangling of the various Christian denominations for its possession, which had so often led to bloodshed; by gaudy altars, the bartering of candles, the gross irreverence of the Mohammedan guardians. Better far that the exact spot where Divine Love was crucified should remain unknown, since that knowledge, instead of making for reverent peace, would only serve to engender strife.

They had just examined the cave called Jeremiah's grotto, at the foot of the hill, when Patricia became conscious of a man in the attire of a Jerusalemite Christian, who seemed to be watching her with special intent. Every time she looked in his direction she encountered the dog-like expression of his melancholy eyes, and as he did not attempt to ask for *backsheesh*, she wondered why he favoured her with his regard. When they left the grotto, he walked, or rather glided away in an opposite direction, but no sooner had they arrived at the Tombs of the Kings than he suddenly reappeared, although it was impossible to tell which way he had come.

Patricia felt vaguely alarmed, but she scarcely liked to communicate her nervousness to the others. The last bell of St. George's opposite had almost ceased, and there was no time to look at the tombs, so they crossed over and entered the church without delay. The man also crossed, peered into the vestibule, and then withdrew; but, unobserved by Patricia, re-entered when the service began, and remained until the beginning of the sermon.

To no one in the sacred building did Evensong sound more solemn and sweet than to the girl who for so long had been alienated from her Church. The General Confession, Psalms, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis brought back a host of recollections to her mind, even though she had lapsed into indifference for some time before her marriage. She could almost imagine herself back in the little parish church of Newlingham Heath—her father's village—with her mother's memorial tablet and window just above her head, and the memorial chancel rails a few paces to the front. Ah, if that mother had lived, what a different training she would have received! For the Countess Torrens had been known for her gentle piety, and it was only since her death that the Earl had drifted into Agnosticism. Thoroughly repentant and subdued, she determined to reconsecrate her life to the Highest, and to do all in her power to atone for her temporary aberration. The difficulties of the situation vanished away as she meditated upon the marvellous compelling power of the Divine. She was so certain that if she were but true to the highest instincts of her spiritual nature, all things would work together for good. The pettiness of the Jewish ceremonial should trouble her not at all; she would look through and above it to the Great Majesty beyond.

There was a new impress of spirituality upon her face when, the service over, she left the church. The Princess guessed the nature of her thoughts, and instead of criticising—as she usually did—the sermon, the music, and the congregation, she remained silent for awhile. The Devonian curate suggested a walk to the Mount of Olives, for the

night was fine, and the moon brilliantly full. So they betook themselves through the north-eastern suburb of the city, and past St. Stephen's Gate, near where a belated beggar afflicted with the terrible disease of leprosy called out his melancholy warning "Lebbra!" and solicited alms. Then down they went into the Kidron Valley, and past the venerable olive trees of Gethsemane, where they paused awhile. Bathed in moonlight, the Sacred Garden seemed enwrapt by a solemn peace, and as lonely as in the time of old, save for the little chapel tended by Franciscan monks. Whether this were the authentic spot or not, it could not have been far away where the Agony of the Divine Sufferer had taken place; for the Mount of Olives was close at hand, and though all the ecclesiastical localities were spurious, this sacred mount remained unchanged.

The ascent was steep and difficult, but they climbed high enough to obtain a splendid view. They could look right down into the Temple area on one side, and towards Bethany and the Dead Sea on the other. The air was cool and balmy, and so still that they scarcely cared to disturb the silence by conversation, but the Princess could not resist the temptation to quote some verses of a poem she remembered, which so beautifully described the scene:

"The full moon rose o'er Anathoth,
And gleamed upon the lone Dead Sea,
Threw silver spears o'er Olivet
And touched each hoary rock and tree.

In solemn darkness Kedron lay;
But all the wealth of light was poured
Fondly upon Jerusalem,
The ancient city of the Lord.

As ivory her houses gleamed
Against the blue of hill and sky,
And all her slender towers arose,
Like shafts of silver thrown on high.

No sound profaned the holy scene,
Save the sad jackal's plaintive wail ;
No light of lamp, no ray of star,
Disturbed the shadows blue and pale.

And just so looked Jerusalem
To Him, who, on the self-same spot,
Would long ago have sheltered her
Beneath His wing, but she would not.

So she remains unchanged and lone,
Till He shall come again and fold
In the vast pity of His love
Creeds, nations, empires, worlds untold." [1]

"I like that," said Patricia, with a sigh of enjoyment, when she had finished. "And oh, how glorious it is up here! No wonder our Saviour loved to come here when He wished to be alone. I like this better than all the other historic places we have seen, because it is the work of Nature, and there is no chance of its having been artificially disturbed. The same blue sky overhead, the same rocks and stones and flowers as were here over nineteen hundred years ago, when He walked and taught on these slopes. This is grander than all the churches which have been erected in His name ; it is an everlasting witness—Heaven's own natural church!"

Surprised at her own effusiveness, she turned away and walked a few paces to the rear, alone. It was something to be remembered, this moonlight night on the Mount of Olives, with the sleeping city below ;

[1] "Jerusalem by Moonlight" (Margaret Thomas).

and the emotions of her newly-quickened soul—they were to be remembered too. How good was God; how fair was the earth; how sweet was life! Could she not say with Browning,

> "God's in His Heaven,
> All's right with the world"?

for at this height the troublous details of human existence sank into insignificance compared with the grandeur of eternity which knows not time. With a strange feeling of exaltation she stooped down, and plucking a tiny flower from the rocky soil, pinned it gently to her breast. Then with a sigh of perfect contentment she rejoined her friends. No matter what sorrow there might be for her in the future, she was strong—she had braced herself to endure.

CHAPTER X

THE BLOW FALLS

It was quite late (for Jerusalem) when Patricia drove home in her friend's little *arabiyeh*, but the Engelmacher household were still astir. In the drawing-room she found her husband playing cards with the doctor and two other gentlemen, and smoking a Turkish nargileh. The fumes were not unpleasant, so she would not allow him to put it away on her account. Taking the little chair he placed for her, she sat down at his side. She had no desire to watch the play—indeed the very sight of cards was distasteful to her just then; but she liked to be near her husband, and to talk to him between the deals.

"There is a letter from your father," he said, when she had been introduced to Dr. Engelmacher's friends. "He has been staying at Burstall Abbey, but thinks of coming over here on a visit for a change. He has photographed almost every place of interest in Europe, and would like to add a few Oriental scenes to his collection. You would be pleased to see him, would you not, dear?"

"Yes, of course, dear."

She took the letter out of his pocket-book and read it for herself. Lord Torrens did not write often, and his epistles were generally brief and to the point, but this one extended over four pages of

closely-written notepaper, and had evidently taken him some time to indite. He said he was longing for a sight of his daughter's bonnie face; and as he usually concealed his feelings by a mask of cold austerity, Patricia was somewhat surprised. Wrapped up in his books and hobbies, she had always left him severely alone unless he particularly asked for her society. She had never given him credit for the human sympathy which, in spite of his crusty exterior, he undoubtedly possessed.

She put the letter back into the envelope as the men threw down the cards in order to partake of the refreshments which Mrs. Engelmacher had thoughtfully provided; for although they had had supper scarcely an hour before, they were already thirsty again. Montella rose and stretched himself with an air of relief. At the same moment there came a violent ringing at the courtyard bell.

"*Donner und Blitz!*" exclaimed Dr. Engelmacher, with resentment. "Is the house on fire? Who has the impudence to pull the bell so that it can be heard all over Jerusalem? *Dummkopp!* Stupidhead! I will tell him so to his face."

He continued to demolish a huge slice of cake, however, with imperturbability, and carefully filled his friends' glasses with wine. A moment later the door was thrown open with a flourish, and after a brief altercation without, three men appeared on the threshold. The foremost was Ben Yetzel, the Chief Rabbi, in all the glory of his official robes.

His visit at that hour, and after his quarrel with Montella, was so totally unexpected that the occupants of the room were all taken aback. Dr. Engelmacher swallowed the remaining portion of his cake in one

mouthful, after which he was obliged to hastily gulp down a glass of wine to save himself from choking. His friends stared at the new-comers with curiosity, and Lionel grasped the back of the chair with an air of defiance. But the most agitated of all was Patricia, who had recognised in one of Ben Yetzel's companions the man she had met by Jeremiah's Grotto, and again at the Tombs of the Kings. No wonder he had watched her so carefully; he was evidently in the Chief Rabbi's service as a spy.

Judging by the pomposity with which Ben Yetzel advanced into the room, his errand was aggressive in intent. Taking not the slightest notice of Montella, he began to talk to Dr. Engelmacher in Hebrew, his voice raised in excitement, and his features glowing with a fanatical light. For a while Lionel took no part in the colloquy, and listened in silence, with lowering brow; but at last he could restrain himself no longer, and spoke in the deep and peculiarly resonant voice which betrayed his agitation. Then there ensued a veritable babel of noise and confusion of tongues; for the simultaneous combination of Hebrew, German, and English, and all spoken in anger, did not conduce to the clear understanding of either side.

Patricia had never felt so uncomfortable in her life. Although she could not understand exactly what they were saying, she knew that the dissension was in some way connected with herself. Her one desire was to escape from the room, but she dare not attract attention by rising from her seat. So she remained, until hearing her little boy crying in the room above, she took courage and moved towards the door. But the Rabbi's lynx eyes caught the

action, and just as she reached the threshold, she was asked by Dr. Engelmacher to remain.

"I am very sorry, Lady Patricia," he said, in a more gentle voice than he had used to the men, "but the Chief Rabbi is labouring under a misapprehension, and we had better set him right. He declares, on the authority of his employee here, that you joined in the service at the Church of St. George this evening. I have told him that the employee must have made a mistake, and perhaps confused you with your friend, the Princess; but he will not be satisfied until he hears the denial from your own lips. He wishes you to tell him yourself that you did not enter the church while service was proceeding."

There was a breathless pause. Patricia remained standing, her fair face proudly raised.

"I cannot tell him that," she said, addressing the doctor, but looking straight at the Rabbi. "I went to the church with the Princess—the first time for many years. I saw no harm in it, or I would not have gone. I did not think I was being watched."

Montella beat an impatient tattoo on the table at his side.

"Absurd!" he exclaimed, with irritation. "Ben Yetzel has no right to send out spies. Besides, what harm has my wife done? Surely she can accompany her friend to church without all this fuss being made? She went simply on account of the Princess; she could scarcely have done otherwise, since she was on a visit to the hospice. Dr. and Mrs. Engelmacher know that Lady Patricia is a faithful Jewess and observes the Law."

The Chief Rabbi understood English, although he seldom cared to speak it.

"A faithful Jewess bends not the knee in a Christian church," he said. "Yussuf here sat just opposite her and saw her join in the prayers and hymns. The lady is not a Jewess, even though she does profess to keep the Holy Law. She is a Christian; and for the wife of the Governor of Haifa to be a Christian is a scandalous thing."

"She is not a Christian!" denied Montella, with heat. "She renounced her Christianity before she became my wife. Ask her, and she will tell you; she does not believe in Christ."

Again the appeal was made to the girl herself. Patricia felt the eyes of the room upon her, and the colour rushed to her cheeks. With beating heart she gazed almost piteously at her inexorable accusers. Oh, Lionel, most devoted of husbands, most foolish of men! Why had he put the question direct, with so much confidence in her unbelief? Neither sophistry nor prevarication would avail now; she must speak the truth, even though to utter the words might ruin her life's happiness. But then—quick as a lightning flash the thought came—why give these people the satisfaction of victory? Why play into their hands, and witness the chagrin of her husband? Why not say no in public and yes in private. Ah, but she could not do that; she dare not again deny her faith.

"My husband does not know," she said, in a stifled voice. "I did renounce Christianity before my marriage, and I have tried to keep the Jewish Law until this day, and intend still to do so as long as it is necessary. But while I have been in Jerusalem my religious views have undergone a change. The Chief Rabbi is unnecessarily harsh, but

he is correct in his statement. I do believe in Christ. I believe in Him with all my heart and soul!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen, the silence which succeeded her avowal could not have been more pregnant with surprise. The Chief Rabbi's expression lightened into one of triumph, and his satellites, taking their cue from him, looked about them with calm contempt. Dr. Engelmacher spread his hands deprecatingly, and gave vent to a shrug of the shoulders which was eloquent with meaning, whilst Montella—almost stunned by the unexpectedness of the dénouement—started to his feet in sorrow and amazement.

"Patricia!" he exclaimed, in a voice of poignant grief. "You don't mean it—you, who have been so staunch and true ever since you became a Jewess. Oh, you don't realise what you are saying, dearest. You have been carried away by the emotions called up by these historic scenes!"

She shook her head. "I must speak the truth, dear," she answered softly, "or I should despise myself for a coward."

Then she sank on to a chair, almost overcome with the heat and the excitement. The blow had fallen; she dared not think what the consequence would be.

"For the wife of the Governor of Haifa to be a Christian is a scandalous thing," repeated Ben Yetzel quietly, in Hebrew. "Either Mr. Montella must resign his post, or there must be a divorce."

Dr. Engelmacher was the only one near enough to hear his dictum.

"Gently, my dear sir," he returned, in a tone of reproof. "If we live, we shall see; there is plenty of time."

But he knew that his friend Montella was in a most difficult predicament, and that it would need all his astuteness to extract him from the same.

He rose, in order to show that he considered the interview at an end; and the Chief Rabbi, well satisfied with the work he had accomplished, took his departure with due ceremony. There was an awkward pause when the door had closed behind him, and Patricia seized the opportunity to escape from the room. Scarcely knowing whither she went, she rushed up the shallow staircase to the apartment which served as her boudoir. Her one desire was to be alone for a few minutes—anywhere away from the people she had offended. Opening the door which led into the night-nursery, she peeped timidly into the room, and seeing that her baby was alone, advanced gently towards his little cot. Although he seemed so still, he was not asleep, but lay staring up at the pattern on the wall with wide-open eyes. Hearing the rustle of her dress, however, he sat up in eager anticipation.

"Nanna just gone down'tairs," he informed her, even before she asked him. "Baby hot."

"Too hot to sleep?" she asked gently, and lifting him up into her arms, pushed the curls away from his forehead.

It was a relief to feel his loving little caress, to have the golden head nestling against her shoulder, to hear the piping notes of the baby voice. His very presence soothed her as no other earthly thing could have done; he seemed just like a little cherub of peace.

"Mammy not go 'way," he said contentedly, his

tiny hands grasping her wrist. "Mammy 'tay wiv baby always?"

He looked up confidingly into her face, but the expected answer was not forthcoming. A hot tear splashed on to his hair; and although but a baby, he knew instinctively that something was wrong. He did not know that his words had caused a dread possibility to flash across his mother's mind—for the result of that evening's confession might mean separation, not only from her husband, but from her child. Seeing her distress, he began to sob in sympathy, and clung to her with almost convulsive force.

"Mammy not go 'way!" he wailed, over and over again. "Mammy 'tay with baby!" and he refused to be consoled, until Patricia declared unceasingly that she would never forsake him.

She stayed until he was asleep again, and then, leaving him in the charge of Anne, returned to her own room. Too much perturbed to methodically disrobe, she took her favourite seat by the casement window, and rested her elbows lightly on the ledge. The moon still shone with brilliant splendour, illumining the whole city with its silvery radiance; and away to the east she could see the Sacred Mount upon whose slopes she had so recently stood. The view recalled her lofty aspirations, and endued her with courage. She was surely not so weak as to quail at the first attack!

But the sound of her husband's footsteps caused her heart to beat fast again with apprehension. What would he say, she wondered, and how display his anger? She had never seen him angry—at least, never with her; for in all the four years of their

married life they had not quarrelled once. She glanced up from beneath her long lashes as he entered the room, and noticed with a pang of compunction that he looked haggard and pale. But although she longed to say something, the words froze on her lips. Always reserved by nature, she became suddenly self-conscious, and instead of showing sympathy, as she longed to do, the result was a stony silence.

But Montella understood. Locking the door with his usual care, he advanced towards the dressing-table and turned up the light. Then taking a little chair at her side, he grasped both her hands.

"Patricia, how could you?" he said, so quietly that she could scarcely catch his voice. "How could you, dearest? You do not realise what you have done!"

He gazed into the depths of her eyes, as though he would read her very soul. She looked back, and saw that there was no anger, but only deep, impenetrable sorrow reflected there. And then he explained. He was not so shocked that she had returned to her former religion—indeed, he had always known that she had found Judaism difficult; but that she should have publicly confessed her relapse, and in the very presence of the Chief Rabbi—that was where she had done irreparable harm.

"Under those circumstances prevarication was justifiable," he said, when she had protested her inability to answer otherwise. "You could have said something—anything—only to defy Ben Yetzel and put him off the track."

"I could not tell a deliberate falsehood," she answered, in a voice as low as his own. "I am sure no good ever comes of telling a lie."

"Ah, but you do not understand!" he said, in agitation. "To Ben Yetzel your admission is the peg on which to hang his revenge. He has hated me ever since I opposed his priestly tyranny, and now he has the power to ruin me. Shall I tell you the ultimatum he has given to Engelmacher concerning us? Believe me, dearest, it is as hard for me to say as it is for you to hear; but it is this: either I must resign my post—which means leaving Palestine in disgrace—or—or there must be a—divorce."

He brought out the last word as though he could hardly get it to pass his lips. Patricia pressed her hands to her face in an agony of feeling.

"Oh, no! no! *no!*" she cried, in a passionate voice. "Not divorce! It is too dreadful! Anything but that! I will go away, to Germany, to England, anywhere in Europe; but you must remain my husband, and I your wife. Surely if we are separated for ever the Rabbi will be satisfied; surely he, a minister of God, is not so utterly wicked as to wish to break the most sacred bonds of our marriage. Let him part us so that we shall never meet again. In the sight of Heaven I shall always be your wife!"

Her self-control collapsed completely, and she gave vent to such sobs as seemed to come from the depths of her being. Montella took her in his arms, and endeavoured to comfort her with the assurance that the hated contingency should never occur. But he felt no less miserable in his way than she did in hers. He knew that their separation was inevitable, and that it might be indefinitely prolonged. He knew also that life in Palestine would be almost unendurable without Patricia at his side.

"Oh, darling, darling, what grief you have brought down upon us both!" he exclaimed, in anguish. "Truly did your Christ say, '*I came not to send peace, but a sword!*' Is not that sword piercing your heart and mine? Cursed be all creeds which bring dissension and sorrow in their wake, which separate a husband from his wife, a mother from her child! How can I send you away—you whom I have sworn to protect and cherish? To know that you are lonely, and that I cannot comfort you; that you are ill, and I cannot sit beside you; that you want me, and I cannot come. Oh, Patricia, they have laid their finger on the weak spot in my manhood's armour! I cannot bear to let you go away!"

She had never seen him so intensely moved. She dried her eyes with a feeling almost of awe, and in her desire to comfort him, recovered her own self-possession.

"We must both be brave, dearest," she said, in a broken voice. "If it is necessary for us to part for a time, it will not last for ever—nothing lasts for ever. Don't let us make it harder for each other than we can help. Let us try to think of the—the—happy reunion in the future."

"The future? But when? So far as I know, I am settled in Haifa for life. If we part, it may be for years, for we do not know when we shall see each other again." He paused, evidently struck by a new idea, and continued impulsively: "Patricia, why should we give up our happiness for the sake of people who do not care two straws whether we live or die? Why should I slave and toil and worry, only to be rewarded by base ingratitude? Resign

my post! Well, why not? What is the governorship worth in comparison with you!"

He rose and paced the room with bent head and folded arms. It was his moment of weakness, and the girl knew it; but she could not help considering the alternative he suggested. If he left Palestine, they could go and live quietly somewhere on the Continent; he might even obtain permission to return to England. At least, it would be better than an indefinite separation; she did not care where she lived, so long as she were with him. But she knew that by so doing he would be guilty of forsaking his people and losing his honour, and that she would never forgive herself for having blighted his career.

"No, dearest; you must not abandon your post just when you are most needed," she said, with a heavy sigh. "An Englishman must do his duty at the cost of life itself. I know you better than you think, Lionel. Life would not be worth living to you without your honour. Besides, it would break your mother's heart; in her eyes, you are ever the dauntless champion of the Jews."

"The dauntless champion of the Jews!" he repeated bitterly. "I wonder sometimes if the Jews are worth championing. Where is the grand spirit of unity and discipline which held together the nation of old? Quarrellings, bickerings, murmurings, grumbling at every semblance of authority, one striving to out-do the other; that is what one has to contend with in these days. Oh, how I long to throw it all up, to let them go their own way, and end the struggle by the survival of the fittest! How I long to escape with you to some quiet little spot,

where we might live in peace and quiet happiness with our child. Since all these people are selfish, why should not I be selfish too? The temptation is so great—so great! I have not the power to withstand it!"

"But you must!" she cried, in a tense voice. "Lionel, this is unworthy of you! When the children of Israel complained and murmured in the wilderness, did Moses forsake them in disgust? Ah, no; a leader must expect to suffer by and for his people. Having put your hand to the plough, you must not look back. You have been so brave and so noble until this very day. Do not spoil your record by turning coward at the last."

"Coward!" The word stung him like a lash. "Good God, no! But, Patricia—" He turned towards her with a gesture of appeal. "You love me? Ah, I know you do! And yet you can urge me to stick to my guns whilst you go away to live in loneliness, perhaps for the remainder of your life? I cannot understand it. . . . Is this love?"

"Yes, of the truest kind," she answered, her deep eyes glistening with tears. "'*I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more.*' Do you think I'm not longing to say, 'Come with me to the other end of the world, and leave these people to look after themselves'? But I must not, I dare not! Your duty lies in Palestine, and here you must stay. I know that when you are your old self again, you will say that I was right."

"Of course you are right; but I am not of the self-sacrificing sort. I wouldn't mind going under fire and having a bullet put through my head for my country's sake—that's soon over; but I don't like

having the agony prolonged." He flung himself on to a chair, and added, in a different voice: "What of the child? My mother will never free you from your promise to have him brought up as a Jew. She will do her utmost to retain him in her custody. You must not let him go back to Haifa if you wish to keep him with you. Possession is nine points of the law."

She shuddered. "It is terrible to have to use force in the matter. Surely Lady Montella will not object to my having him with me while he is so young? I am his mother, and his place is with me. Afterwards, when he is grown up, it will be a different matter; but now—"

She covered her face with her hands, unable to finish the sentence. She knew even while she spoke that she would have to drink her cup of bitterness to the dregs. To part with her husband was terrible enough; yet they would both have the consciousness of having done their duty to sustain them. But in the case of her child it was different, since there was no such urgent necessity. She knew that if Lady Montella succeeded in keeping him from her, her last ray of comfort would be gone.

CHAPTER XI

FAREWELL!

BEN YETZEL was not slow to act on his discovery. The news of Lady Patricia's secession spread with lightning rapidity, and in two days every one in Palestine who had the slightest connection with Lionel Montella was aware of it. In these days of liberty it is difficult to understand the importance of such an event, but in the eyes of the Palestinian Jews it was of the greatest consequence. That the Governor's wife was not of Jewish birth had always been a drawback in their eyes, but that she should openly profess the Christian Faith was unendurable. Her return to Haifa, therefore, was practically out of the question, and she decided to leave with the Princess at the end of the week.

And then came the dispute about the child. Lady Montella was up in arms at the suggestion that he should accompany his mother to Europe; and arrived in Jerusalem in hot haste, or at least as soon as the boat and train would bring her. She said very little to her daughter-in-law, and maintained a distinctly cold demeanour; but she spoke her mind freely to her son, whose filial respect was sadly tried.

"This is the happy result of a mixed marriage!" she exclaimed, with angry sarcasm. "Did I not tell you that the pride of the Montellas would depart?

Little Julian is practically the last descendant of the house—for we do not know whether Ferdinand is alive or dead—and that he should grow up a Christian would be a disgrace I should never survive. Your poor father trusted to me to do all in my power to keep up the honour of the family; to keep it—as it has ever been till now—purely Jewish. Do you think that if Patricia takes the boy she will not educate him in her faith? Of course she will; she cannot do otherwise, whatever promises she may make."

"But he is so young," urged Montella, with reproach. "You forget that he is only a baby. Why not let Patricia have the comfort of him until he is old enough to be taught? It will be several years before he is able to understand anything of religious matters. Heaven knows I should miss the little chap if he left me too, but I think it cruel to part mother and child.

"It is cruel only to be kind," she rejoined vigorously. "Julian must be nurtured in Judaism, must breathe the atmosphere from babyhood if he is to grow up a true Jew. The earliest years of a child's life are the most important, for it is then he imbibes the ideas which cling to him till he becomes a man. Soon he will be old enough to notice the Sabbath candles, and we shall be able to teach him the beginnings of our faith. But remove him from all Jewish influence, let Patricia teach him the Christian Catechism, and whatever else he may be, he will never grow up a Jew. No, there is no alternative in the matter; no compromise is possible. Julian must stay with us to be properly trained for the responsibilities he will have to fulfil. Patricia ought never to have married you if she did not mean to remain a Jewess. If she

suffers, she has no one to blame but herself. With us religions are not lightly received to be afterwards cast away."

By which it will be seen that Lady Montella was obdurate, and did not mean to be gainsayed. If Patricia intended to take her baby away, it would have to be by violence, and she was of much too gentle a nature to think of forcible measures. Moreover, she knew that Lady Montella was right, and that if she had the training of the child she could not help bringing him up as a Christian—thereby breaking the promise she had made before his birth. She knew also that, tended by his grandmother and the faithful Anne, he would be in safe hands; but this did not compensate her for the grief of the parting. The wrench was terrible, and on the morning of her departure she felt that she must set all at defiance and take him bodily away. The child seemed to understand what was happening, and clung to her with the tenacity of fear; and thus, clasped in each other's arms, they awaited the dread signal which should warn them that the hour was come.

Lady Montella, away from her religious principles, was as warm-hearted as it was possible for woman to be, and could not witness the separation unmoved. She knew that both husband and wife were suffering keenly, and that Patricia's heart was bleeding for her child. But the sternness of her decision was not relaxed, and the carriage drove up relentlessly to take the young mother away. Not caring to see the final farewell, she joined Mrs. Engelmacher in the room above; and a few minutes later she knew by the sound of wheels that all was over, and Patricia had gone.

The Princess was already at the little station when the unhappy pair arrived. She had never seen either of them look so ill, but was too wise to express her concern. Instead, she tried to make light of the whole matter, and drew their attention to the peculiar mixture of nationalities and personalities which composed the motley crowd on the platform. And there was the luggage to be seen to, and the red tape of Oriental officialism to be overcome, as well as the numerous necessities for the journey to the West. When all was accomplished, however, there still remained a little time before the train was due to start; and to the Montellas these few minutes were the hardest of all.

Lionel stood with his arm around his wife, and gazed piteously at the Princess.

"You will take care of my darling, won't you, Olive?" he said, with a pathetic air of appeal. "In letting her go, I am parting with half of my life, and I know she feels it as much as I do, and perhaps more, because she is leaving the one little ray of sunshine she might have retained. But don't let her fret, will you? Fretting doesn't do a bit of good, and it will make her ill. Perhaps I shall be able to come over to Felsen-Schvoenig for a holiday next winter, or—or— Oh, we must look forward to meeting again soon, however it's managed or whatever we do. So you'll cheer her up, won't you? Don't let her get depressed. And I'll write every mail, and—and—"

But his flow of language gave way; he could not bring himself to say another word.

"Oh, I'll cheer her up," the Princess returned confidently. "You may rely on me. You both look

as mournful as if you were parting for ever; but that's quite absurd. After I've seen my poor old Karl, I shall go to England and get my sister to work round that wooden-headed Moore. I fancy from what Mamie writes that the Expulsion Act is not working so well as he anticipated. Anyway, coming straight from the Holy Land, I shall be able to give them both a piece of my mind. Oh, there's no knowing what may happen in another year. You must both keep up your spirits and hope for the best. It's a long lane that has no turning, and I guess yours will turn pretty soon."

She was so anxious to comfort them that the words seemed to fall over each other at express speed. Lionel thanked her from the bottom of his heart, and did his best to conjure up a wan smile. Then the signal for starting was given, and the final leave-takings had to be exchanged. A last fond embrace, a cordial hand-shake with the Princess, and Montella assisted the two travellers to mount their somewhat ungainly carriage. Then a vista of waving hand-kerchiefs, of straining eyes, as the train puffed and snorted on its way; and a few minutes later he was left standing on the platform surrounded by people—but alone. Turning resolutely, he made his way through the crowd and back to Dr. Engelmacher's house, his shoulders thrown back, his head bravely raised. His mother, anxious and suddenly diffident, awaited him in the drawing-room, and as he approached the door, gently called his name. But either he did not hear, or he was not inclined to respond, for he passed by quickly, and ascended to the nursery.

"He has gone to his boy for consolation," said Dr.

Engelmacher, as the baby's joyful "Daddy!" reached their ears. "Poor chap! he seems very much—what do you call it—cut down? No, I meant to say cut up. Ach, the women! Nine-tenths sorrow to a man, and one-tenth joy. Poor Montella! I am full of regrets. He loves his wife."

"Yes, but he must love duty more," Lady Montella rejoined, feeling a trifle hurt that he had not come straight back to her. "It will do him no harm to suffer a little; he is a man, and men are made strong through suffering. Ah, if I were only a man, what would I not do for my people, what would I not undergo for them! Years ago I determined that what I could not do should be accomplished by my son; and all my thoughts, my prayers have been centred on him for that purpose. He must show the world what can be done by a Jew who has had all the advantages of Western culture that wealth and influence can procure; it is his vocation, and he must not shirk it. That is why I am hard as adamant when any hindrance occurs. He ought never to have taken a Christian wife."

"Of course not," assented the doctor complacently. "Your sentiments are most admirable, dear lady; but Montella, though a man, is human, and has a heart. It is impossible to expect him to be a mere patriotic machine; and even the greatest patriots in history have had a feminine angel somewhere in the background. Ach, the women! But Ben Yetzel was a beast; it ought never to have been necessary to send Lady Patricia away. However, what's done is done. Montella must make the best of a bad business, and live it down."

And upstairs the young Governor was already

trying to carry out this very injunction. He was sitting near the open window with the child on his knee, and battling with the sore and angry feelings which threatened to rise and overwhelm him. Anne, busying herself about the room, saw that his face was white and set, and likened the expression in his eyes to that of a gazelle who had been cruelly wounded. But although her kind old heart was overflowing with sympathy, she had too much tact to speak, and knew that her respectful silence was perhaps more eloquent than words. Afterwards he joined the others below, and entered into their conversation with such zest that they were almost astonished. Lady Montella glanced at him with pride, and congratulated herself upon the fact that he had borne the separation well.

But from that day forth he was a changed man. The iron had entered into his soul.

CHAPTER XII

RAIE'S DILEMMA

ZILLAH LORM was suffering from *ennui*. Haifa, even with Lady Montella and Lionel close at hand, was monotonous enough, but Haifa without them was simply unbearable. She had never liked Raie Emanuel at the best of times, and to have to be entertained by her was a hardship to which she could scarcely submit. But until the Montellas returned there was no alternative, and she was obliged to resign herself to the inevitable. She managed to spend most of her time with some people whom she had known in England, thus saving her little deputy-hostess a considerable amount of trouble. For several days they scarcely met, except at meals, and even then Zillah did not always choose to remain at home.

The news of Patricia's departure, however, created a sensation, which both felt too keenly to ignore. Raie's tender little heart was sincerely grieved, for she possessed a deep affection both for Lionel and his wife. Miss Lorm, on the other hand, seemed almost to exult over the affair, and affected an air of superior wisdom which jarred upon the younger girl.

"What a muddle Lionel has made of his life!" she exclaimed, with unusual complacency. "I always said the marriage would not turn out well—mixed marriages seldom do. I believe in her heart

of hearts Patricia hates everything Jewish. I suppose she thought she had had about enough of it here; it *is* dull in Palestine for a society girl, I must admit. Still, she might have managed to make a more graceful exit; she could have pleaded ill-health as an excuse for returning to Europe. Anything would have been better than this: to be publicly expelled like a naughty schoolgirl!"

Raie gave the cushions on her wicker-chair an unnecessary thump.

"I don't understand what you mean," she returned coldly. "Lady Patricia has been obliged to sacrifice her home and happiness for the sake of her religion. It all seems very quixotic, very unnecessary; but—there it is!"

"Fiddlesticks! Who, in these enlightened days, sacrifices anything for religion? Neither Christians nor Jews; we are all materialists. What we can see and understand we believe—for the rest, it is all in the clouds; let it remain there! No, my dear, you will never get me to believe that. Patricia has evidently been sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt, otherwise the social amenities of English life. She is well-born, beautiful in her way, and has had the *entrée* to the most exclusive circles of society. Her ladyship felt cramped and bored in this insanitary hole of a place, and surrounded by Jews—always Jews. She longed to get back to her own sphere, to entertain in the parental mansion in Grosvenor Square, to drive in the park, to shop in Regent Street, to feel civilised once more. The desire was perfectly natural; I can even sympathise with her. But religion — no! This is not the age of martyrdom."

"All the same, you are wrong—quite wrong," returned Raie, with heat. "Patricia was devoted to her husband and her baby. Do you think she would have given them up for all the Londons in the world? You may be a materialist, but she is an idealist, and with her spiritual things are of vital importance. You do not understand her, but I do; and I am certain that away from her husband she will not go near society or take any part in the London season. She will probably bury herself in Thorpe Burstall for the remainder of her life. I am certain she would never have left Lionel of her own accord; but she was obliged to speak the truth, and the Chief Rabbi sent her away."

Miss Lorm shrugged her shoulders, still unconvinced, but did not trouble to argue the matter further, and at that moment a masculine figure appeared in the doorway. Possessing fine features, and presumably English, Zillah wondered where he could have come from. Raie had walked to the other end of the garden, and was standing beneath a shady palm.

The stranger advanced with hesitation.

"I beg your pardon," he said, doffing his white cap. "They told me I should find Miss Emanuel here. I am sorry—"

Zillah favoured him with a quick scrutiny, and decided that he was the handsomest man she had yet met in Palestine.

"Oh, it's all right," she answered readily. "Miss Emanuel is here. If you will sit down I will call her." And making room for him beside her on the settle, she let her musical voice enunciate the name—"Raie!"

Raie turned quickly and came towards them, her

simple garden-hat pushed carelessly back, and allowing the dark curls to escape their usual bonds. At sight of the visitor a warm colour leapt into her cheeks, and her eyes unconsciously brightened; but she suppressed the words which rose to her lips, and formally held out her hand.

It was very wrong of him to come in that manner, even if he did know that the Montellas were away. She managed to convey this opinion to him, although she did not put it into actual words. She was embarrassed and shy, and seemed scarcely to know what to say; and when she introduced him—as "Mr. Merryweather"—to Miss Lorm, she did it with a hesitancy which was distinctly noticeable. She wished Zillah would leave them to themselves; but Zillah meant to stop, and to find out as much as ever she could about the stranger, and to see if she could put two and two together to make four. So there was a sense of restraint between them which was uncomfortable in the extreme, and Raie worked herself up almost to the verge of tears. But it was worse still when Zillah, with almost impertinent curiosity, began to cross-question him with regard to his sojourn in the Holy Land. She was not satisfied until she had mentally "placed" him in the order of globe-trotters to which he belonged; and proceeded with such insistence that it needed all Mr. Merryweather's skill to parry her questions. Raie found herself left out in the cold, and sat, the personification of silent reproach. She was almost glad when he rose to take his leave, and saw him downstairs with an air of dejection. Away from Miss Lorm, however, her spirits soon revived; and seeing that the library was unoccupied, she drew him inside.

He bent down, and raising her face gently with his two hands, looked into her eyes with kindly scrutiny.

"Well?" he interrogated, almost quizzingly. "I have come back. Is not my little Raie pleased?"

"Yes," she answered, returning his gaze without a smile; "but—"

"'But me no buts,'" he rejoined lightly. "I have displeased you, little girl. Is not that so? What have I done?"

"You should have let me know that you were coming," she said, in an aggrieved tone. "You have put me in a difficult position. Miss Lorm is very inquisitive; she will want to know all about you—and our acquaintance—when I go back to her. I would have had her out of the way if I had known. I have been in torture during the last half-hour."

"Poor child!" He bent still further and kissed her on the forehead. "I ought not to have come at all; but I was told that the Montellas and Anne were in Jerusalem, so I thought the coast was clear. I wanted to give you a pleasant surprise—but there! I always bungle everything I do."

"Oh, no!" The grasp on his arm tightened. "It *was* a pleasant surprise, and of course you did not know Miss Lorm was here." The smile which had been delayed began to play about her mouth and eyes. "Tell me what you have been doing, Ferdinand," she added eagerly, as he pushed forward a chair. "I am longing to know. Was your mission to England successful?"

"Almost—but not quite. A man I particularly want to consult—he is a solicitor—is at present in New York; but he will be back in about six weeks' time, when I shall have to go to England again."

"In six weeks? Then why did you come all this way for so short a time? What trouble and expense —just to see me!"

He smiled affectionately.

"You are worth any amount of trouble and expense," he rejoined gallantly. "But I must be honest. I have come to Haifa this time for a special purpose; and I believe you can help me, Raie."

"Yes?" She became serious. "What is it? Of course I will help you if I can."

He rose from his chair, and closing the door, looked stealthily round the room.

"There are some papers in connection with—the forgery," he said, in a low but clear voice. "They must be in Lionel's keeping; unless they have been destroyed, which is unlikely. I want them—I must have them—in order to verify a certain piece of evidence in connection with the case. And as I cannot ask for them without disclosing my identity, I want you to get them for me, dear."

"I? But how can I?" She looked up with a startled expression on her face. "Lionel keeps most of his documents at the solicitors'—at least he used to do in England. I have not the slightest idea where to look for them. Where do you think they will be?"

For answer, he walked to the iron safe which stood in the opposite corner, and tapped it with his stick.

"This is where they will be — docketed all together with the date 19— and probably labelled 'Ferdinand.'" He turned towards her with a gesture of appeal, and held out his hands. "Raie, you will manage this for me, dear, won't you? Oh, you must, you must! It is of such great importance

—it will finally vindicate my character—it will mean happiness for us both. Look, this is a patent lock. I don't know how it works, but you must seize an opportunity of watching Lionel open it; and then by hook or crook you must get hold of the keys. The papers are of no use to him—he will never miss them; but they are of the greatest consequence in the world to me, and it is of no use for me to return to England without them. Afterwards, when the whole thing is cleared up, we will tell him all about it; and I know he will say our action was justified. Raie—don't look so strange—it's nothing; and you have pluck. Put yourself in my position—an innocent man falsely accused. Oh, you will do it for me—for *me!* I know you will!"

She stood quite still, and for a moment made no response. Her face was white, and her brown eyes looked preternaturally large and troubled. And when she spoke her voice sounded strangely hoarse.

"You want me to—steal some papers out of Lionel's safe," she said, with difficulty. "Oh, but, Ferdinand, I—I can't; it would not be right. Why do you not take him into your confidence instead, and ask him for them yourself? He is such a good man; he would never betray your trust."

"I do not ask you to *steal*," he answered, with the faintest touch of irritation. "I merely ask you to borrow the documents for me. When I have done with them—when my counsel have seen them—you can put them back. My dear child, why will you not understand? To approach Lionel at this crisis would be to spoil everything. He may be the best-meaning fellow in the world, but his course of procedure would be the very opposite of mine. Oh, I

can't explain it all; it would take days—weeks! But surely you can trust me—if you love me, dear?"

She took a step forward, and looked at him with doubt in her eyes.

"I do—love you," she faltered, the colour returning to her cheeks; "but—but I hate anything that is not straightforward—that is underhand. Lady Montella and Lionel have been my best friends ever since I was a tiny girl; I could not bear to think I was perhaps acting as a traitor to them in their own house."

Loyal little soul! Ferdinand could not help casting her a glance of admiration, even though he was vexed by her dalliance.

"There is nothing traitorous about the action; you exaggerate the importance," he said; and then approaching nearer, he made her look straight into his eyes. "How can I make you believe in me?" he asked, in a voice which was almost stern, yet sad. "Raie, I swear to you that I am an honourable man, that I too would despise this means were the cause not so vitally urgent. Look!"—he held up the locket on his watch-chain, and opened it to disclose a minute but faithful portrait—"here is a picture of Sir Julian. Remember—I am my father's son."

She glanced down at the well-remembered features of the late baronet, and up again at the strong face of the new one, with an indefinable feeling of compunction; and her will gave way. After all, he was right; she ought to trust him—she would trust him, even with her very life. A wave of emotion swept right through her being, and found expression in the depths of her brown eyes. He saw it, and knew that

he had conquered, knew too that the struggle had been keen.

"Dear little girl!" he exclaimed softly. "You would never forsake a man in distress. Think of the future; it will mean so much for us both."

"Very well, I will try to do what you want," she said, with an effort; "but you must never blame me if any evil comes of it. I cannot pretend to like the commission, even though I am doing it for your sake. But I believe in you—I do believe that you have been cruelly wronged in the past, although you will not tell me all. How much time can you give me? Lionel does not return until next Monday."

"You can have a whole month, dear," he returned eagerly, "a few days longer if necessary. I know I can rely on you to use your discretion."

She nodded.

"Yes; I think I know of a way. Lionel has some letters of mine locked up in that safe. If I ask him, he will give me the keys. I shall do it in less than a month, if I can do it at all. But oh, I wish there were some other means!"

She sighed, and seeing the cloud on her usually bright face, he did his best to drive it away. Then promising to meet her at Lionel's new house the following day at sunset, he took his departure, and she was left to meditate on the subject of his request. After all, it was not so very dreadful: only to take a few papers out of the safe if she could find them, and to put them back after they had been read. But it was the idea of secrecy that she did not like; of performing an action of which she feared Lionel Montella would not approve. Since she had promised, however, there was no retraction possible,

and she reminded herself of the fact with firmly-set lips.

Zillah Lorm could talk of nothing else but "Mr. Merryweather" that night. She considered him distinctly handsome, and although his manners were somewhat colonial, he was evidently cultured and well-read. Raie listened to her eulogy with a feeling akin to jealousy, and refused to state how she had become acquainted with the young man. Whereupon her interlocutor stormed the citadel by making certain suppositions, to be contradicted by Raie if she chose to do so.

"A secret love-affair!" she said, when she had almost exhausted her remarks. "I should not have thought it of you, Raie. And with a man so much older than yourself! Do you know anything of his family?"

"Yes, I know his people very well," answered the girl, almost petulantly; and then she excused herself and went to bed. She was determined not to discuss Ferdinand with Zillah Lorm.

"Little chit!" exclaimed Zillah to herself, as she left the room. "I shall soon stop her game when Lady Montella comes back. I don't believe she knows much more about him than I do. And as if a man of his calibre could really be in love with a silly little thing like her! Absurd! He would be much more likely to fancy a beautiful woman—like myself. I wonder—"

And resting her finely chiselled face on her hand, she gave herself up to cogitations which were vague, but pleasant. She was of too unscrupulous a nature to consider the claims of Raie.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EMPTY HOUSE

THE Montellas were back in Haifa. They arrived late in the afternoon, after a stormy passage from Jaffa, and received a hearty welcome from the two girls. But of course the absence of Patricia made itself felt, even though they were careful not to mention it. It was as if a shadow had fallen on the house which made them speak softly, as though there had been a death. Lionel spent the greater part of his time in his study, and seemed always anxious to get away from his family. His most constant companion was his little boy; otherwise he preferred to be alone.

He had dreaded the return to Haifa, and had postponed it as long as possible, knowing that his worthy citizens were all agog on the matter of his wife's departure. His eyes were open to the mingled glances of scorn and sympathy which were cast upon him when he walked through the streets of the town; and he refused to give the explanation which was expected, yet could not very well be sought. He took his part in communal matters with the same energy as of old; but apart from his official duties he was as immovable as the Sphinx. Declining all the invitations which poured in upon him from the wealthier members of the corporation, he seemed to wish to lead the life of a recluse. His mother knew not whether to be

displeased or grieved, but remonstrated with him vigorously on the subject one day.

"This will never do," she said, when for the third time he had absented himself from her weekly receptions. "You will make yourself unpopular if you persist in holding yourself aloof socially from the people. Besides, it isn't manly, Lionel; you are wearing your heart on your sleeve."

So he promised to amend his ways; and the study saw less of him again; and joining more in the social life of the town, a little of his old buoyancy returned. But there always remained a sore place in his heart, only to be temporarily relieved by the balm of her precious letters. They arrived with every mail—those dear messages from his beloved.

He had been back a full week before he could bring himself to visit his new house. The operations of the builders and decorators had been suspended during his stay in Jerusalem, and he had not yet given the order for them to resume their work. Making a sudden decision one morning, however, he walked quietly up the avenue of palm-trees, and unlocked the great oaken doors at the entrance to the hall. The house was, as he had anticipated, totally deserted, and his steps echoed and re-echoed drearily on the stone floor. Passing through the wonderful atrium, whose fame had already reached from one end of Syria to the other, he entered the boudoir, and removing the holland covering, sat down on one of the dainty chairs. What a hideous, ghastly mockery the whole place appeared! how it seemed to rise up and taunt him with its emptiness, with its bright but hollow splendour! He glanced about him with a shudder, and rested his head wearily on his

hand. The decorations, to which he had given so much thought—for Patricia; the exquisite frescoes painted by an eminent Jewish artist—for Patricia; the beautifully carved bureau with its cunning design—for Patricia; the hangings of vieux rose—Patricia's favourite hue; the little oil-painting of the Thames—Patricia's own picture. All for Patricia, the one woman in the world to whom it was a joy to render homage; and she had been snatched from him by the crass stupidity of his people, by the ignorant prejudice of a stubborn race! Oh, the foolishness of men, to bow down to the fanatical ceremonialism of dogma and creed, and turn away from the purest of all passions—conjugal love! Rising, he threw open the windows, and with bent head, paced the room; then espying the flutter of a white gown amid the myrtle bushes in the avenue, paused in silent wonder. How came a woman in the grounds—his grounds—not knowing that he was there?

He closed the window, and went forth to investigate, almost inclined to believe that he was the victim of an illusion. But no; for as he appeared beneath the portico, the figure approached and sauntered leisurely towards him. For one moment his heart stood still, a wild hypothesis taking possession of his brain. Patricia in some mysterious way had come back to him, either in the flesh, or by the projection of her astral body—he had heard and read of such things. Thought telepathy, spiritualism—he had never believed in either, yet he knew by hearsay that the most wonderful phenomena had actually occurred; and if to other people, why not to himself? But the fantastic idea born of his ardent longing was suddenly doomed to disappointment; the figure

proved to be not Patricia, but merely that of Zillah Lorm.

"I wondered if you were here," she said sweetly, as he advanced to meet her. "Do you know, I come here every day, just for a walk—the little side gate is always open. But I have never been inside the house, although I have heard so much about it. Would you not like to show it to me? We have a good opportunity now."

He had never felt more disinclined to play the part of showman, but knowing that she was really eager to go over the place, he could not well refuse. Admitting her by the principal entrance, he allowed her to wander through the rooms at her own sweet will, and listened to her enthusiastic observations with no pleasure, and perhaps a little pain. Yielding to a feeling he could not describe, he passed over the door of the boudoir; but Zillah was quick enough to notice his hesitation, and inexorably demanded a view.

"What is it, Lionel?" she asked playfully. "Bluebeard's chamber, or the *sanctum sanctorum?*"

He threw open the door, and stood back for her to enter.

"Neither," he answered quietly. "It is the room which was to have been my wife's boudoir."

"Oh!" She threw him a glance of somewhat steely commiseration, and proceeded to look about her with cold criticism. Montella went to the window, his eyes dreamily scanning the distant mountain ranges of Galilee. He wanted to be blind and deaf for a few minutes, until his visitor had concluded her examination of the room. He did not want to hear her careless remarks; they affected him like so many knife thrusts.

But Miss Lorm was not the woman to spare him

one small thrust. She sat down at the little piano—Patricia's own piano—and playing a short prelude, glided into that song of Goring Thomas's "A Summer Night." Then her rich voice, subdued to a low tone of sweetness, sent forth its full notes to thrill her listener and fill the house with music:

"'*Have you forgotten, love, so soon*
That night, that lovely night in June?'"

She sang without effort, and almost as if her thoughts were elsewhere, but as the song proceeded, her voice gained in intensity. Lionel stood immovable, hating the sound of music in that house and under those conditions. The empty corridor beyond caught the echo and threw it back with a hollow and depressing sound. But she could sing—Heavens, how she could sing! Whatever soul she possessed seemed to be concentrated in her voice.

"You are not in the humour for music, my friend?" she said, veering round on the music-stool when she had finished, to see no gaze of admiration, but only an unappreciative back. "It does sound strange in this great unfinished house, I admit. By the way, when will the workmen have finished? When will you come into residence here?"

"Never." He turned away from the window and faced her, with a set look in his eyes, then added, in explanation: "The house is a wilderness, an empty barn. It can never be a home—to me."

"No?" She glanced at him questioningly from under her thick lashes. "But I thought you took such pride in it. Lady Montella told me long ago that it was your hobby. And the expense—why, it must have cost a fortune. What will you do with it

if you do not intend to live in it? Oh, it seems such a shame—such a magnificent house—!"

"I shall sell it if I can," he said, meeting the reproach in her eyes steadily. "I had hoped to spend many happy years here, but now— It is a mere white elephant to me. They can call it 'Montella's Disappointment' if they like; I don't care. I shall have this furniture removed as soon as I can; and I shall never come here again."

"But if she should come back?"

"She will never come back; it is not possible for her ever to live in Palestine again. That dream is over, but of course the awakening is hard: and this" —he touched the silken hangings behind their cover —"this all seems part of it. I can't realise . . ."

He broke off suddenly, fearing he said too much. He had spoken incoherently, and with a sharpness which betokened deep feeling. Zillah's features relaxed into a forced expression of sympathy.

"Poor fellow!" she exclaimed softly. "You have suffered, and you are lonely. I can sympathise with you; for—although you would not think it—I am lonely too."

"Yes?" He looked up quickly, to encounter the radiance of her eyes.

"I left England because I was unhappy," she went on, in a confidential tone. "I was engaged to Lord St. Maur; but he was much younger than myself, and when his people found out, they persuaded him to break it off; and he was weak, and consented. Of course I wasn't in love with him—he was a mere boy; but I would have married him if I could, since the man I did love—once—was beyond my reach." She looked at him steadily, and added, in a different

voice: "It is the loneliness I dread, and now I seem to have no aim in life. What is the use of my voice in Palestine? The greatest of singers is not wanted here."

"Not yet, perhaps," he added, in his usual voice, "but the time will come. At present all our energies are directed on the things necessary to the welfare of our citizens, the introduction of hygiene, the prevention of drought and famine, and so on. Afterwards we shall be able to turn our thoughts to lighter matters—the recreation of the people; and then you may be sure music will not be left out of account."

"And meanwhile I must wait as patiently as I can?" She sighed. "Oh, dear, how I hate life—hate it! The inconsistencies, the mistakes, the waste of suffering—all one long series of disappointments."

"And yet there do occur moments, sometimes, which make it worth while to have lived!"

"To you, perhaps, because you have experienced the joy of requited love, but not to me. Why, even that shallow-minded little Raie is happier than I am. She has a lover—she meets him every day, and that gives her a zest and joy in life which are like the condiments in food. But I am boring you—" She paused abruptly, and rose from her chair. "Let us go, or we shall have the full glare of the sun upon us. This intolerable heat is another of the evils which has fallen to our lot to bear."

Lionel rose with alacrity, and replacing the coverings, relocked the door. He could not help wondering what had made Miss Lorm so unusually serious, and why she had chosen to favour him with her confidence. He was silent as they passed through the atrium, and Zillah, on her part, had little to say.

She was thinking how much better it would be if Montella would and could get a divorce, so that he might be free to marry again. She knew that she was liked by his mother; and that if it were possible, she would have a good chance of becoming his second wife. To be mistress of this mansion! She caught her breath at the thought, albeit a foolish one. She knew that Patricia would be his wife as long as she lived, even though they never saw each other again.

"Did you not say Raie had a lover?" asked her companion, as he closed the great doors. "I did not know it."

Zillah opened her sunshade, and held it daintily at the back of her head.

"Perhaps I ought not to have mentioned it," she responded carelessly, "but I think you and Lady Montella ought to know. Raie has not told me much, but it is evidently a secret love-affair. They meet clandestinely every day somewhere in this direction."

"And the man?"

"Is a Mr. Merryweather, presumably a tourist. He came to the Government House one evening, and I was rather favourably impressed. But he is too old and too worldly-wise for Raie. He must be over thirty, and has evidently been about a good deal."

"Merryweather?" repeated Lionel thoughtfully. "Is he a Jew?"

"Yes; at least Raie says he is, although he has not the appearance of one."

"And they made each other's acquaintance while we were in Jerusalem, I suppose?" There was a note of vexation in his voice. "I am surprised at Raie. My mother will be very displeased. But

perhaps Mrs. Emanuel—Raie's mother — knows something about it?"

Miss Lorm gave vent to a little shrug. "Perhaps," she replied carelessly. "I do not know. Don't say I told you anything about it, will you, Lionel? Raie would be so cross, and— Good gracious, there they are!"

She stopped suddenly in her walk, and placed her hand detainingly on his arm. Montella's eyes followed the direction of her glance with astonishment, and he could not resist an exclamation of surprise. The two delinquents were seated in a shady arbour, almost concealed by deeply-hanging evergreens. Their faces were in shadow, but Miss Lorm recognised the girl's light hat.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, with a touch of excitement. "Catch them red-handed, or pretend not to see them?"

"I don't know." Montella paused irresolute. It was very wrong of Raie to meet a young man in this unconventional manner, especially as she had been brought up so strictly; but not being aware of all the circumstances, he was at a loss to know how to proceed. He had half a mind to pass by quietly, and speak to the girl afterwards; but approaching the arbour he caught the sound of his own name, and could not help standing still.

"Lionel is wiser than I thought," the man was saying, in a tone of dissatisfaction. "So he will not trust you with the keys? But are you sure you went the right way to work, Raie, dear? You see if you looked at all agitated when you asked him, you probably made him suspicious."

His accents were strong and well-bred. Montella

started as at a familiar sound, but was almost too dumfounded to move.

"My cheeks did burn," the girl acknowledged, almost tearfully. "You see Lionel gave me one of his straight looks—as if he were reading me through and through, and I felt so guilty that I dared not say a word. He gave me my letters out of the safe, and I just took them and went, thankful to get away. I did my best really, but it is such a difficult task, dear. I am sure I shall never be able to succeed."

"Oh, yes, you will," he returned encouragingly. "You can ask for the keys to return the letters, and have another try. Or if it comes to the worst, we must resort to stratagem ; all's fair in love and war."

"Is it?" thought Lionel, who could remain hidden no longer. Motioning to Miss Lorm to keep in the background, he suddenly presented himself before the apparent conspirators. Raie gave a scream, and turned as pale as her dress ; Ferdinand rose to his feet in an attitude of defence, his large sun-hat well over his face. For a moment there was a breathless silence, whilst Zillah looked on with enjoyment. Then Lionel spoke, although he scarcely knew what to say.

"I am the son of Miss Emanuel's foster-aunt, and these are my grounds," he said stiffly. "Hearing my name mentioned as I passed, I could not help listening to a scrap of your conversation. I cannot quite understand what you have to do with this young lady, who is very young, and has no right to form any attachment without the consent of her guardians. From what I can gather from your words, however, I understand that you pose as her lover merely to win her as a confederate. I shall be glad of some

explanation, if you please. I can scarcely believe that Miss Emanuel—of whom I hold a very high opinion—would deliberately help you to burgle my safe!"

He addressed the tourist alone, and vouchsafed not a glance at Raie. The girl looked appealingly at her lover, who seemed to be rapidly summing up the situation. His decision was evidently a desperate one, for he threw back his shoulders with a gesture of courage.

"I am not a burglar," he replied, carefully choosing his words, "and I need not explain unless I choose. But I know that if I keep silence I shall be putting Miss Emanuel in a false position, and I would not do that for the world. It was my intention to keep my incognito until my innocence was absolutely proved; but I suppose that is impossible since you have found me out. Look at me, old fellow. Don't you know who I am?"

He pulled off his hat, and stood bare-headed in the sunlight—a veritable picture of manly strength. Lionel scanned the rugged face—the deep-set eyes so like his own—and recognised it even as he had partially known the voice.

"Ferdinand!" he exclaimed in a startled tone. "What does this mean? How in Heaven's name have you come here? Where have you come from?" and suppressing the hundred and one questions which rose to his lips, he regarded his step-brother in bewildered astonishment, whilst Zillah Lorm advanced, an eager glow in her eyes.

Ferdinand assisted his sweetheart to rise, and bowed to Miss Lorm.

"I will tell you everything presently, Lionel—

when we are alone," he answered complacently. "I should not like to tire the ladies with an account of my adventures."

Zillah swept past Raie and held out her hand.

"I congratulate you on your return, *Sir* Ferdinand," she said, with stress on the title, and a curious smile on her face.

"Frank Merryweather" had risen considerably in her estimation during the last ten minutes. No matter what crime he had committed, he was a baronet, and evidently not in captivity. She was determined to enter the lists with Raie.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

To Raie the recognition of Ferdinand was the best thing that could have happened, and a load was thereby lifted from her mind. The task he had set her to perform had been most repugnant to her taste, and she was thankful in the extreme that the difficulty had been obviated in a more open-handed way. As it happened, the necessary documents were not in the safe at all, but in a private bureau in Montella's bedroom; so that all her trouble and heart-burning would have been in vain. Lionel readily forgave the intended ruse, and produced the papers without delay. His greatest desire was to help his step-brother to regain his honour and good name.

But Lady Montella was not so easily won. The circumstances of the forgery had been very black against Ferdinand, even if he had been, as was supposed, the mere tool of another and older man. She knew that her husband until his dying day had believed him guilty, had wrested him from his affection, had deprived him of all his privileges of sonship to bestow them on her own—the younger—son. If, therefore, Ferdinand had been wrongfully accused, he was a much-injured man; but his personality did not impress her in that way. At least, he bore no malice

towards any of his accusers, and seemed to desire to forget the actors in the unpleasant drama of the past. But, on the other hand, he appeared anxious to claim his title—valueless though it was in Palestine—to reinstate himself as a member of his father's House, and to win back his reputation as an honourable man. Until his innocence had been established, therefore, she preferred to remain on neutral terms. But she allowed him to come to the Government House as often as he pleased, even though she would not yet receive him as a son.

He informed her of his desire to marry Raie on the very first evening of his reconciliation ; and begged that if Mrs. Emanuel gave her consent she would not withhold hers. Lady Montella knew not whether to be displeased or glad, and held her answer in abeyance until Ferdinand should have paid his intended visit to England ; but she sent for Raie's mother in order to discuss the affair.

Raie was not in the room when the consultation took place, but waited on tenter-hooks in the roof-garden above. Occasionally sentences in her mother's high-pitched voice reached her through the open window, but she riveted her attention on the book she was supposed to be reading, and resolutely determined not to hear. After what seemed an unconscionable time, she was sent for to express her views. Lady Montella was, as usual, calm and placid ; Mrs. Emanuel beamed with delight.

"We have come to the conclusion that if Sir Ferdinand is able to establish his innocence in England, your engagement will receive our consent," her foster-aunt said, in answer to her glance of interrogation ; "but are you sure you love him well

enough to marry him, dear? Remember the difference in your ages. He is nearly eleven years older than yourself."

"Oh, that's nothing," put in Mrs. Emanuel quickly, before her daughter had time to reply. "It's much better than if it were the other way about. Besides, I should not care for Raie to marry a much younger man; and if she loves him—"

"I do love him," said the girl, with fervour. "I should love him if he were a hundred. If I can't marry him, mamma, I shall be an old maid."

"God forbid!" ejaculated Mrs. Emanuel piously, under her breath. "Not if I know it." She had not yet recovered from the rupture of Harriet's betrothal.

"I should advise you not to place too much confidence in Ferdinand's success, dear," advised Lady Montella thoughtfully. "It is always difficult to reopen an old case, and two of the witnesses in connection with it are dead. And you see if he fails to prove his innocence, the slur on his name remains."

"Oh, but he will succeed, Aunt Inez—he must!" rejoined Raie, with youthful optimism. She did not add that she meant to be true to him under any circumstances, nevertheless such was the case. As long as she was morally convinced of his innocence, the opinion of the world mattered little. She knew, however, that she could not marry him for some time to come unless the proof were found.

So the matter was settled, pending the decision of the judicial court; and Ferdinand was tacitly acknowledged as Raie's *fiancé*. There was now no need for any clandestine trysts, but they still met constantly in the grounds of the empty house. Zillah often

passed their arbour in her daily walk, and observing that they seemed absorbed in mutual admiration, experienced a pang of envy at her jealous heart. She had scarcely spoken to Raie since the recognition of her lover, but she always seemed to have a good deal to say to Sir Ferdinand whenever she came across him. Secretly she longed to display her superior charms ; to fascinate him by the power of her voice and smile. Realising that Lionel was for ever beyond her reach, she desired to transfer her attention to his step-brother. That he was already engaged seemed to trouble her not at all ; for until he were actually married she considered him free.

But as the day of his departure approached, and she had made no progress, she grew desperate ; and on the last evening a crisis came. Raie, as it happened, was confined to her bed with a cold, and her lover was obliged to say his farewell by proxy. Lady Montella conveyed all the tender messages, after which she drove off to a reception with her son. Zillah, therefore, was left to entertain Sir Ferdinand for an hour alone, an opportunity of which she was determined to make the most.

As usual, she tried the effect of music first, and sang her sweetest songs. She knew, of course, that he was watching her through a thin haze of smoke ; and felt almost magnetically the power of his eyes on her face. Then, rising suddenly, she suggested an adjournment to the roof. She felt, somehow, that they would both feel less restraint in the open air and under the light of the moon.

He helped her to place the filmy lace mantilla, with its red roses, on her head, and in doing so his fingers touched hers. She looked up, thrilled

and eager, the colour slowly spreading over her cheeks; and struck by her expression, he returned her gaze with surprise. But they exchanged not a word, and ascended to the garden in silence; and with scarcely a remark he settled her comfortably in a deck-chair. Then he lighted a fresh cigar, and puffed away in contentment, whilst the soft breeze dispersed the smoke and gently caressed their hair.

"I have often wondered what the exact pleasure is that you men find in the weed," Zillah observed, thinking he had gazed long enough at the deep blue of the sky. "I suppose it soothes you in a way we women cannot understand."

"I really don't know." He held the cigar between his fingers and surveyed it contemplatively. "It's all habit, I suppose; but I do think a good cigar aids one's mental digestion. And I know that if I am in a bad temper, a quiet smoke will always pull me round."

"'Open confession is good for the soul,'" she quoted, with a smile. "I hope that does not often occur."

"What—the bad temper?"

"Yes; but *I* ought not to say anything." She sighed. "People in glass houses should not throw stones. I am in a bad temper with everybody and everything, most of all with myself."

She spoke impulsively, and with such force that the young man glanced towards her with wonder.

"Indeed," he responded courteously. "That sounds rather depressing. May I ask for what reason you have quarrelled with yourself?"

Zillah turned her face away, so that the moonlight caught her classic profile.

"The reason—oh, simply that I am unhappy."

"And why?"

"Because I hate Palestine and everything connected with it!" she answered, a defiant ring in her voice. "I came here because I could not help myself—because—as a Jewess—I could no longer stay in the old country. I thought from Lady Montella's letters that Haifa was a *beau ideal* of a place; but she sees everything Jewish from behind rose-coloured spectacles. To me it is a desert with scarcely an oasis to break the monotony, with a climate as sultry as that of the Inferno, and an atmosphere of brick-dust and tar. Building to right of us, building to left of us—scaffoldings, ladders, and paint-pots; what is so depressing as a half-built town? And as for society—why, there isn't any worth speaking of, because the people here will not recognise distinctions of class. Yesterday a poverty-stricken woman—an odious, unkempt individual—had the audacity to approach me in a most familiar manner, in order to tell me that she lived next door to my grandfather in Poland, and as my father was no better than hers, she thought she might claim me as a friend. That is the result of liberty and equality; we are all children of Abraham, and education counts for nothing. Oh, it's disgusting! I hate it! Until Palestine gets a king and an aristocracy the country will not be worth living in to cultured Jews."

She raised herself on her arm, her eyes flaming with the emotion caused by her outburst. Ferdinand remarked the passion in her voice, and felt vaguely stirred. But she did not give him time to speak, and continued hurriedly:

"I want to escape—to get away from Palestine, even at the risk of offending your step-mother. If I stay here while the country is in its present condition,

I shall only droop and die. Sir Ferdinand, you are the only man in the world who can help me; but will you? I have no right—except that of old friendship with the Montellas—to ask you; and yet—"

"I will help you with pleasure if I can," he put in, unable to resist the pathetic look of appeal. "What is it you want me to do?"

"You are going to England," she said abruptly. "But England does not admit a Jew. Tell me: how do you intend to evade the authorities?"

He flashed her a quick glance. "I have a special permit from a member of the Cabinet—Mr. Lawson Holmes," he replied promptly. "I shall be allowed to stay until my case is concluded without being forced to take the Assimilation Oath."

"Then you will go as Sir Ferdinand Montella?"

"No; I shall retain my old pseudonym *pro tem.* We have all come to the conclusion that that will be best."

Zillah drew a deep breath. "Then my scheme is practicable," she said, with clasped hands. "I too cannot enter the country in my own name; but disguised and under an alias—it is my only chance. Sir Ferdinand, will you take me with you? It will only be for the journey; at Charing Cross Station we can part. Once in England, I have friends to whom I can go."

"Take you with me?" he repeated, starting with a feeling of uneasiness. "But, Miss Lorm! I don't see how I can."

"Why not? I can go as Miss Merryweather, your sister—a lady missionary, if you like." Her eyes shone naïvely. "Oh, there's not a shadow of harm in it. I merely want your protection politically; and

when I arrive there I will write to the Montellas and explain. I dare not tell them before I go. They would want to keep me here."

"And meanwhile?" He flung away his cigar, and rising, paced the garden in agitation. Then he came back and stood at her side. "You don't understand," he said, in a voice which sounded almost stern. "What would my people say; what would Raie's feelings be? They might place a wrong construction —might think. . . . Oh, no, it wouldn't do—wouldn't do at all. It would place us both in an utterly false position. You must see that yourself."

Zillah's mouth grew stubborn.

"I don't see it at all," she returned, looking straight before her. "'*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*' If Raie cannot trust you, she is not worthy of your affection. Besides, it's so ridiculous. Surely a P. & O. steamer is large enough to hold us both. In my part of official sister I need only speak to you at meals."

Ferdinand shook his head.

"Whether you speak to me much or little has nothing to do with the question," he said imperturbably. "Miss Lorm, do be reasonable. If you were engaged to a man, and that man went on a three weeks' journey with another lady—and that lady an inmate of your house—without telling you, how would *you* take it? Excuse my putting it so plainly, but you give me no alternative. Raie is the most trusting little soul in the world, but she would not be human if she did not have her doubts. Were I to accede to your request, I should be landed in a most unpleasant situation. Besides, it can't be done; my permit is available only for myself."

His decision was evidently final, and Zillah knew that it was not to be shaken. Once on a P. & O. steamer, she had hoped to win him through the social amenities of life on board ship; and if the Montellas—as Ferdinand feared—should place a wrong construction on her departure, so much the better for the success of her plan. But seeing that she could not enlist his aid, her dream gradually and regretfully melted away, until, overcome by disappointment and mortification, she threw away her self-control and burst into tears.

"I did not think you would refuse," she sobbed, using her handkerchief with great ostentation. "I had packed my things and made all arrangements; I could have got off without telling a soul."

Ferdinand hated to see a woman cry, and felt suddenly mean and despicable. But he could not bring himself to give way to her desire; something within him seemed to rise up and say, "*Thou shalt not!*" It was his love for Raie, his fear of doing her a seeming injustice. For himself he cared not at all—he was too well-seasoned a man of the world.

Zillah dried her eyes, feeling that she had betrayed herself for nought, and shivering, asked to return to the drawing-room. As they entered through the somewhat narrow doorway, a slender, white-clad figure rose from the embrasure formed by the window. Coming from without into the glare of the artificial light, Ferdinand could scarcely believe his eyes; but he was not deceived—it was indeed Raie.

"I was so hot that I could not stay in bed, Ferdie," she explained, putting her arm confidingly in his.

"Besides, I could not let you go without saying good-bye properly, dearest, if I had fifty colds."

And clinging to him like a child, she drew him into the library, whilst Zillah was left to nurse her anger alone. Watching them depart, her heart burned with impotent rage, as she realised how miserably she had been defeated. It seemed to her that failure was written right across her life, that she was pursued by a hard and inexorable fate. Gifted with a good voice and personal charms of no mean order, she had been ambitious—over ambitious to do well. Consequently she had frequently overreached herself when just at the point of success. She was at enmity with God, the world, and herself; and she was obliged to acknowledge it—she had only herself to blame. Nevertheless, her courage revived when her first feelings of depression had dissolved.

"He goes to England to-morrow without me," she said to herself, in a whisper. "Never mind, I shall soon follow him up. In England I shall at least be happier than here. Assimilation is the way—I ought to have done it long ago. Fool that I was to consider the Montellas! They are intoxicated with their Judaism—but I — I—am a total abstainer from Judaism."

And then she laughed hysterically at her feeble joke. She was clearly much overwrought.

BOOK III

THE LAST OF THE EDICT

"*And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.*"—JEREMIAH xii. 15.

CHAPTER I

ENGLAND ONCE MORE

PATRICIA left the Princess with her husband at Felsen-Schvoenig, and journeyed back to London with Lord Torrens, whom she had met at Port Said. The Earl was somewhat annoyed at having been baulked of his Eastern tour; but as he did not care to visit the Holy Land in his daughter's absence, his only alternative was to turn back. Secretly, he considered Patricia's action absurdly quixotic, for he could not in the least understand her point of view. To him all creeds were but variations of one fundamental principle, and to quarrel over individual shades of opinion seemed unnecessary in the extreme. As for sentiment in religion, he refused to recognise that at all, since it could be analysed and physically accounted for by the materialistic exponents of modern thought. Nevertheless he was considerate enough not to add to the girl's suffering by vain reproaches; he knew that, for the present, it was best to leave her alone.

The home-coming seemed so strange that Patricia felt as if she were in a dream. Coming from the brilliant sunshine of the East, London looked cold and grey, and the dresses of the people curiously prosaic after the gay colours of the Orient. It was about six o'clock in the evening, and the lamps were

already lit. Clerks and business people generally were travelling homewards, newspaper boys were calling out the special editions of the evening papers, and the traffic rushed bewilderingly through the crowded streets. Leaning back in the brougham, Patricia's head seemed to swim, for the roads and shops and people had apparently magnified themselves tenfold, and loomed large and vast through the gloom of the evening twilight. She was thankful when the carriage slackened pace, and pulled up before the familiar door. But even Grosvenor Square seemed to have extended in area. She could not imagine why everything looked so immense.

The house was still in a state of metaphorical curl-papers and overalls, for they intended to stay there only for one night. By Patricia's orders, Mrs. Lowther—her old companion—had taken a small villa near Richmond, where the girl intended to live out her days. She established herself there the very next morning, thankful to have some occupation to distract her thoughts. The villa, which rejoiced in the romantic name of "Ivydene," was light and pretty, and more attractive in its way than the solemn magnificence of the parental mansion. Mrs. Lowther, too, had done all in her power to make it home-like: there were bright fires in the grates and flowers in the vases, and the hundred-and-one little things which contribute to domestic comfort. The girl could not help feeling touched by the thoughtfulness which had evidently been expended on her account, and as she went over the small but prettily-decorated rooms, her eyes grew misty with no far-distant tears. There was one room in particular which held her spellbound, for the wall-paper depicted

well-known nursery rhymes, such as "Jack and Jill," "Little Miss Muffit," and "Red Ridinghood"; and in one corner stood a brand-new rocking-horse.

"I am so sorry," Mrs. Lowther said, half-apologetically. "I had thought—had made sure—that you would bring your little boy." And she wished she had had the tact not to allow the young mother to enter the room just then, for the sight of the childish appurtenances evidently called up an emotion of pain.

But Patricia begged her not to be concerned.

"It was very kind of you to take so much trouble," she said, going to the window and looking at the tiny lawn without. "Oh, how I wish we could have Julian here! He is such a lovely boy, Lowthy, and so wonderfully intelligent. It nearly broke my heart to have to leave him behind."

"I don't know how you could," her companion returned, almost severely. "It seems unnatural to part a mother from her child. If I had been you—"

Patricia put up her hands as though to ward off a blow. "Yes, I know," she put in hastily. "Don't hurt me, dear. If you had been in my place you would have acted just the same. You don't understand what Judaism is—how it used to rise up between the Montellas and myself like a wall. They would not let me bring baby away for fear I should make a Christian of him, which of course I should do; for I could not help wanting to consecrate his little life to Christ. Oh, I don't wish to go over the whole story again; it is too painful. The Montellas are quite right from their point of view, and I am quite right from mine. We must all do what seems to be our

duty according to our own conscience, even if it seems hard at the time."

Mrs. Lowther regarded her contemplatively.

"How you have changed, Patricia," she observed, placing her hand on the rough mane of the horse. "At the time of your marriage none of these considerations seemed to trouble you. Did I not warn you during your engagement that although you might attempt to enter their Jewish world, you must for ever remain an outsider? I don't want to be cruel, but I can't help telling you how I regret that you did not listen to me. For look at your present position: a wife, and yet practically without a husband—a mother, and yet without a child. Oh, you poor dear girl, if you had only taken my advice you would never have made such a shipwreck of your life!"

Had she not been sincerely sympathetic, Patricia would have been irritated by her comments.

"Oh, I don't regret the past," she responded quickly, "not one little bit; and if I had it to live over again I would marry Lionel just the same. It is not his fault that things have turned out like this; it is the fault of a fanatical Chief Rabbi and a narrow creed. But Lowthy, if you don't mind, I would rather not talk about it any more. You see it hurts; and—and—I shall have to get used to being alone." She held up the locket containing the portraits of her husband and baby, and looking at it thoughtfully, added sadly: "Not that I want to forget these two dear ones. The remembrance of them will remain with me day and night. I can't yet realise that they are all those hundreds of miles away; I want to consult my husband at every turn."

And then dashing away the tears which in spite of her will would come, she left the intended nursery, and descended to the hall.

It took her some time to settle down to her new life in Richmond. Lord Torrens, scarcely caring for the menage of a suburban residence, left after a few days, but the faithful Mrs. Lowther remained. Of callers there were none; for Patricia's object in coming to live so far out was to avoid those who would have visited her in Grosvenor Square. She was in no mood for any kind of social pleasure, nor for the sympathy of kind but curious friends. So she kept her arrival a secret from those who would have been glad to know, and preferred to spend the greater part of her time in solitude.

But Montella had given her a task to perform. He wanted to know her version of the condition of English affairs; and in order to form an opinion, she was obliged to go out and about. So far as she could see, the assimilation process seemed, socially, to be working well enough. The names of Cohen, Jacobs, and Levy no longer existed; but those of Cowan, Jackson, and Leigh were on the increase, and perhaps sounded more euphonious in English ears. In spite of the exodus of the alien immigrants whose presence had been so greatly deplored, however, there were still a great number of the unemployed. Trade was bad—so bad that the prosperity of many families of the middle class was seriously threatened, and complaints were heard on all sides. Several well-known shops in the West End were shut up, and the bankruptcy of a celebrated mercantile house had ruined hundreds. Affairs on the Stock Exchange were quieter than ever they had been

before, and finance, in the absence of two or three of the greatest Jewish capitalists, was at a low ebb. Moreover, people began to attribute the decline in commerce to the removal of Jewish influence by the Expulsion. Many said that the Jews who had gone to Palestine had taken the prosperity of England with them; many more heartily wished for their return. Certain it was that a wave of adversity had spread over the country; the nation seemed to be under a cloud.

"I have not come across many Jews so far," she wrote, "although there must still be a great many here. I went on an exploration expedition to Canonbury and Highbury last week, and found most of the houses there to let. The shops there —or, rather, those that remain—seem to be undergoing a hard struggle, and I was told on inquiry that it was because their principal customers in the past had been those of the Jewish race. The synagogues have, of course, all been swept away; but, judging by statistics, there appears to be very little increase in the attendance at the various churches. The theatres also are not doing so well as of old, as a considerable amount of both talent and patronage has by the Expulsion been sent away. So the practical side of the Bill does not answer so well as it did in theory, and by the man in the street the Government is roundly blamed."

She experienced a peculiar sense of gratification in having to give so unsatisfactory a report. Perhaps she thought it would comfort her husband to know that England missed the Jews, and was not flourishing so well without them; yet she knew that his love for his native country was such that he could not help feeling sincerely grieved.

She had just returned from her peregrination westwards one day, and was walking through the High Street on her way home, when she came face to face with a lady who was preparing to re-enter her carriage. Patricia, full of her own thoughts, would have passed on; but the lady, with an exclamation of surprise, barred the way.

"So I have found you at last, you truant!" she said, in a voice full of satisfaction.

It was Lady Chesterwood, the wife of Athelstan Moore.

Patricia looked up, half abashed, and held out her hand, scarcely knowing how to greet her old friend under the changed circumstances. But Mamie had heard the whole story of the Montellas' separation from the Princess, and had the good grace not to refer to the affair. She insisted on taking the girl into a neighbouring tea-shop in order to have a chat, and gossiped away to her heart's content. Then she suddenly remembered the purpose for which she had come out, and broke off in the middle of her conversation to ask Patricia's advice.

"I meant to call and ask the doctor to come and look at Phyllis—Athelstan's child, you know; but I have not made up my mind whether to do so or not," she said, with an expression of doubt. "Athelstan slept in town last night, but I expect him home to dinner; and if he hears that the doctor has been, he will be so frightfully alarmed. He absolutely worships that girl; and if her little finger aches, he immediately makes up his mind that she is going to die. So I never send for the doctor unless it is really necessary; it doesn't seem worth while to have a fuss for nothing."

"What is the matter with her?" asked Patricia equably. "Nothing serious, I suppose?"

"No, only a sore throat; a cold probably. I dare say she will be better to-morrow."

"A sore throat," repeated Patricia meditatively. "I don't like anything the matter with the throat. I should send for the doctor if I were you."

"You would? Well then, I think you ought to help me to bear the brunt of Athelstan's alarm. Come to dinner, and bring your she-dragon with you if you like. You know where we live: the other side of Richmond Park—Ravenscroft Hall. We dine at seven o'clock, but I shall expect you at half-past six. Now"— as Patricia prepared to remonstrate—"I know you are going to put all sorts of objections in the way, but I shall not accept one of them. I will take absolutely no refusal; you *must* come."

"But, my dear Mamie, how can I?" The girl looked almost bewildered. "To meet the Premier in his own house at dinner, after he has been the means of sending my husband to the Antipodes! Oh, it's impossible! Can't you see the irony of it? There can be no friendship between a Montella and Athelstan Moore."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Countess, unconvinced. "Richmond is not Downing Street. In our own house we have nothing to do with politics; besides, Athelstan may not put in an appearance after all. Don't be so absurdly sensitive, Pat; I want you to come."

But Patricia still hesitated. The thought of being a guest at Mr. Moore's table was so repugnant that it could scarcely be tolerated; yet she felt a secret

curiosity to meet the great anti-Semite again. She would, at least, have something of interest to report to Lionel ; and although she could not introduce the subject of the Expulsion, she might indirectly glean an inkling of the Premier's views. So—not without misgivings—she yielded, and promised to be there by the appointed time. Whether good or evil would come of the visit, however, remained to be seen ; and as she left her friend, she felt as if she were about to trifle with edged tools.

CHAPTER II

AN ANTI-SEMITE STILL

THE "she-dragon," as Mamie unkindly dubbed Mrs. Lowther, did not care to accept the invitation to Ravenscroft Hall, and asked to be excused; so Patricia dressed herself in a simple evening-gown and drove off alone. Excitement had lent a touch of colour to her cheeks, and as the carriage swept up the avenue she trifled nervously with her long neck-chain of pearls. Arrived at the house, however, she soon regained her self-possession, and followed the footman up the stone staircase with her usual equanimity. The Countess received her with cordiality; but seemed curiously diffident. She glanced at the door every now and then with marked uneasiness; her mind was evidently—on some account—disturbed.

"The doctor has not been yet," she said, in answer to Patricia's enquiry. "I am expecting him every minute. I don't quite like the look of Phyllis; she has been shivering so terribly. I do hope she isn't going to be ill."

"Has Mr. Moore seen her?"

"No, he has not arrived yet, but he will be here soon. He wired that he is bringing Mr. Lawson Holmes back with him." Her brow grew troubled. "I want to keep him away from Phyllis until after

dinner, when I hope the doctor will have been. The children always come in to dessert, you know."

The words had scarcely passed her lips when the scrunch of carriage wheels on the gravel approached them, and the hall door closed with a heavy sound. A moment later the men's voices were heard on the stairs, as they parted to go to their respective rooms. The Countess, excusing herself to her guest, went dutifully to greet her husband; but she returned before Patricia had time to notice her absence, and together they descended to the rooms below.

"I think you will find a great change in Athelstan," she said, as Patricia glanced at the large portrait of the Premier which adorned the wall. "He has aged terribly during the last three years, and suffers from periodical fits of depression which seem to take all the life out of him. The doctors cannot account for it, and put it down to overwork. But I believe I know what it is: there is something preying on his mind."

"Yes?" Patricia looked up half wonderingly. "I suppose he is troubled about State affairs?"

The Countess waxed confidential.

"It's the Jews," she said impressively, forgetting, perhaps, the political position of her friend. "I believe they've affected his brain. He thinks about them all day, dreams about them at night, and talks about them in his sleep. It's Jews, Jews, Jews—always Jews! The fact of the matter is, that in pushing the Expulsion Bill he made a tremendous mistake; and he knows it, and is suffering from remorse. But in spite of this he maintains his ground, and won't budge an inch from his original standpoint. He is as hard and as obstinate as a piece of flint."

Patricia turned over the leaves of a magazine with agitation. "Mamie, ought you to tell me this?" she asked, feeling that she had received a confidence which should have been withheld. "Do you think your husband would care for me to know that he is attacked by remorse? Remember, I am the wife of an exiled Jew."

"I don't care anyway," the little woman returned recklessly. "If you can act on that knowledge, so much the better. Oh, Patricia! you do not know what I have suffered during the past two years. You do not know what it is to have a husband so morose that he will scarcely speak, except to say something unkind. For the first few months of our married life, Athelstan was as genial and happy as a boy; but now—now—his only smile is for Phyllis—never for me."

She sank on to a chair, a look of wounded pride in her eyes. Patricia was genuinely sorry, but she scarcely knew what to say. She remembered the boasted power, the desire to rule which had animated the Countess at the time of Moore's proposal. Where was that conquering influence of her feminine personality which was to have decided not only the affairs of her husband, but also of the State? Gone—all gone; nay, it had never been there. For Mamie's will was far too frail to have ever run counter to that of the Premier; and now, after repeated storms, only a crushed and broken spirit remained.

The girl sympathised as best she could, and skilfully drew the conversation to matters of lighter trend. She did not want to hear such secrets, and shrank from prying into the private life of her husband's enemy. But Mamie was naturally

loquacious, and her thoughts expressed themselves in words almost as soon as they entered her mind. It was probably this very garrulity which had sent Moore back into his shell; for knowing that his wife could not be trusted with a secret, he naturally became more reserved.

They were both glad of the presence of Mr. Lawson Holmes at the dinner-table that night. He was a man who could converse well on almost any subject, and possessed a good many interests besides that of politics. Moore was, as usual, pre-occupied and gloomy, and had shaken hands with Patricia as though she had been a complete stranger. The Countess, who had quietly been called away to see the doctor before the commencement of the meal, was pale and silent, so the two guests had the conversation principally to themselves. When the dessert was reached, however, the Premier suddenly awoke as from a sleep, and fixing his steely eyes on his wife's face, inquired solemnly for the children.

Lady Chesterwood's eyes fell.

"Leslie was a naughty boy this afternoon, and I was obliged to punish him," she returned quietly. "And Phyllis—Phyllis is not well."

"Not well?" Moore became visibly alarmed. "What is the matter with her? Has the doctor been?"

"Yes; he says she has a bad sore throat, and must stay in bed. He suggested moving her to the south wing of the house, because it is warmer there and the aspect sunnier, so we have done so. And he doesn't think much of Leslie's old nurse, so he is going to send a trained nurse from the hospital, and perhaps an assistant as well." She paused, out of

breath. "He is coming again to-morrow morning," she added rapidly, "so you can see him then."

Moore tossed off a glass of wine, and excusing himself, rose from the table.

"I shall not wait until to-morrow morning," he said, in a rough voice. "I shall see him to-night. But I must have a look at the child first. Poor little girl! A sore throat—" and without finishing the sentence he left the room.

There was a moment's silence, and then the Countess also rose.

"I suppose I shall have to tell him," she said, with an interrogative look at her two guests. "The child has a touch of diphtheria; that is why we have thought it best to isolate her at once. It is not serious at present, but of course there is no knowing how it may turn out. I think I had better go up to them, if you will not think me very rude. I am so sorry this should have happened just now; it is so unpleasant. But, of course, one cannot help these things."

"Don't apologise, dear," said Patricia kindly. "I will amuse myself in the library until Mr. Holmes has finished his wine. Go to your husband now. I am sure you ought to be with him. It is very unfortunate altogether; I do hope Phyllis will soon be well."

"I should advise you to tell Moore exactly what it is," advised Holmes, as the ladies passed across the threshold. He knew that to keep the Premier in ignorance of the true nature of the illness would only serve to make matters worse, since he must inevitably find out in the course of two or three hours.

He smoked his cigar in solitude, a thoughtful expression on his face. The presence of Lady Patricia Montella in that household had caused him a deep sensation of astonishment, for he had not been aware of her arrival in England. He knew, of course, that Lady Chesterwood was a connection of hers by marriage; but even so, he was surprised that she should be friendly with Moore. Thirsting for information, he threw down his cigar half smoked, and rejoined her without delay. Without appearing unduly curious, he elicited the whole story of her pathetic separation. Then he inquired after his old friend, Montella, in almost affectionate terms, and expressed his regret that Parliament should have lost such a gifted and true young statesman.

"I always liked Montella," he said, when he had related more than one reminiscence of past years; "but he had one weakness: he allowed himself to be ruled by his mother. Now, I have the greatest respect for Lady Montella, but I do not believe in petticoat interference. Montella was quite capable of riding his political horse without the aid of feminine spurs."

"You are quite right, Mr. Holmes," assented the girl, almost surprised at his perception; "but Lady Montella is a strange woman; she has the spirit of a Joan of Arc, and the self-discipline of a nun. I have often wished myself that Lionel were left more to act on his own initiative. His ideas are on a broader plane than his mother's, although he may be less of a Jew."

"Quite so. Dear me, but how the poor fellow did scold me for introducing the Assimilation Bill! And, by Jove! I think he was right. We've made

a ghastly mistake over the whole business, Lady Patricia. You can tell him so if you like."

Patricia was all attention.

"You mean that the result of the Expulsion is unsatisfactory," she interrupted eagerly. "I thought so, judging by all the reports I had heard."

The Cabinet Minister bent forward confidentially.

"Shall I tell you something?" he answered impressively. "England can *not* get along without Jewish money and Jewish brains; and she's shipped all the best of it away—sent it to Palestine to enrich the Holy Land. That's the plain truth—and a truth which is going to be expressed pretty forcibly by the people in Hyde Park next Saturday. Of course, Moore pooh-poohs it, and means to hold out to the end; but it strikes me that there will be a fairly sharp ministerial struggle before long."

"And the result?"

"Ah, who can tell? I don't think we have ever had such a feeble Government as there is now. There's scarcely a man among them worth his salt. Moore still wields that sort of one-man power which is occasionally beneficial, and at times so dangerous; and I believe Moore's mind on the Jewish question is warped. We've got to try and drag that rabid anti-Semitic feeling out of him: it's no easy task."

Patricia remembered what Mamie had told her concerning the Premier's inmost feelings, and grew thoughtful.

"I wonder if I could do anything to change Mr. Moore's opinions," she said slowly. "I have seen so much of both sides that I ought to be able to speak with authority. At present he distrusts me; he has scarcely spoken a word to me this evening, but of

course he may have just felt in a taciturn mood. If I can win him over from anti-Semitism to common sense, will you excuse the petticoat interference for once, Mr. Holmes?"

He smiled good-humouredly at her naïve use of his own expression, but quickly regained his gravity as the door opened to admit the Countess. The unfortunate little lady seemed full of trouble, and sank on to the settee with an expression of despair. Athelstan was behaving in a most ridiculous manner, and declared he would have no trained nurses creeping about the house.

"He wants me to nurse her myself, with the assistance of an old and trusted servant of his first wife's," she said, in a voice which was almost tearful. "He says Phyllis has a horror of strangers. But, Patricia, how can I? I know I'm not strong, and I should be sure to catch it. My throat feels quite sore already at the mere thought."

She looked the picture of misery, with her pale face and troubled eyes. Patricia wondered that she could so easily collapse, but taking pity on her, made a sudden resolve.

"Would Mr. Moore be satisfied if I undertook to nurse her in your place?" she said impulsively, without giving herself time to consider the consequence. "Phyllis will probably remember me; I am not quite a stranger. And I am a good nurse—I like it. So if you will have me, I am quite willing to stay."

Mr. Lawson Holmes cast her a glance of admiration. It seemed to him that her beautiful eyes shone with the light of heroism; and he recognised that hers was the material of which soldiers are

made. But the Countess could not conceal her astonishment.

"You!" she exclaimed, starting to her feet. "Oh, Patricia, you *can't* mean it? Why should you do it for the child of Athelstan Moore? And think of the responsibility and the risk. Diphtheria is so infectious. Are you not afraid?"

"Afraid? No." The girl met her gaze bravely. "I shall not neglect the necessary precautions, you may be sure; but even if I do take the disease, it won't matter—much. Away from my husband, I don't care what happens to me, and that is the very reason why I shall be immune. Besides, this would be what Lionel calls a *Mitzvah*—a good deed which brings a blessing. Oh, I should like to do it; it would give me something to occupy my thoughts!"

Her words unconsciously betrayed the unhappiness of her present position. Her recklessness with regard to the danger amounted almost to desperation; and she seemed to have fully made up her mind. So the Countess, with a feeling almost of awe, went to acquaint the Premier of her unselfish offer; she could not understand her cousin's frame of mind in the least.

The Premier manifested not a flicker of surprise. He returned with his wife to accept the offer with formal gratitude, but Patricia could see that in reality he was much stirred. Moreover, it pleased her to know that he had confidence in her ability, that he could bring himself to trust her with his precious child. Realising the tremendous responsibility she had taken upon herself, she sat down with trembling hand to write to Mrs. Lowther for what she required. She could imagine what that good

lady would say when she read the note, and the flutter there would ensue at Ivydene. Truly the situation was a curious one, though not so outrageous as Mrs. Lowther would make out. But she had long ago made up her mind that life was full of the strangest inconsistencies, and had therefore no compunction in adding one more to the list.

"I have ordered my *chauffeur* to get the car ready," said the Premier, when she had finished the note. "Will you come with me, Holmes?"

"With pleasure." The Cabinet Minister rose with alacrity. "You are going to the doctor, I suppose."

"Yes; but I haven't any faith in him—he is only a local practitioner. I want him to get hold of that specialist, though—I've forgotten the man's name, but you know whom I mean. He cured the Crown-Princess of Germany from the same complaint, and it was stated at the time that he was the only doctor in the world who could have pulled her through. I am certain my little girl will be all right if she is in his hands, and it will be a great comfort for me to have him. But I can't for the life of me think of his name. It was something beginning with a K."

"I know!" exclaimed the Countess, glad to be able to come to the rescue. "It was Dr. Kesten."

Moore gave a sigh of relief.

"That's right," he replied, almost cheerfully. "Kesten. He's a splendid doctor, and a really good and conscientious man. I believe he lives in Portland Place."

"Dr. Kesten?" repeated Mr. Lawson Holmes, in astonishment. "Good gracious, Moore, you can't have him. He's in Palestine—one of the victims of

the Expulsion. Have you forgotten that Kesten is a Jew?"

Patricia looked up with a startled expression on her face, and exchanged a glance with Mr. Holmes. Here indeed was a curious dénouement: Moore was personally feeling the dire result of his own Bill.

And the Premier in his rage and emotion forgot himself for once.

"Hang the Jews!" was his uncivil, but forcible remark.

CHAPTER III

THE MIND OF THE PREMIER

PATRICIA found her post no sinecure. The first thing she did was to send Lady Chesterwood and her little boy to Ivydene; for Mamie's fear of infection was so great that she would most certainly have caught the disease had she remained, even though the south wing in which the child lay was quite apart from the rest of the house. Moore's foolish aversion to professional nurses entailed greater vigilance on the part of the two physicians who were attending the case, and they were obliged to visit the Hall three or four times in the course of the day. In reality the little girl was suffering from a peculiarly mild form of the disease, but her father was so nervous that the very pronouncement of the word "diphtheria" had frightened him beyond measure. For himself he entertained no fear—his was too strong a nature to admit of cowardice; but his love for his child was passionate almost to excess. Patricia had never seen anything like it in her life.

His time was divided between Downing Street, the House of Commons, and Ravenscroft Hall. At the Foreign Office he was dictatorial and shrewd; in the House his speeches lacked nothing of their usual brilliance; but as soon as he returned to the Hall he became a different man. The pomposity departed from him, his step became light, his voice subdued;

and ascending the staircase on tiptoe, the usual question, "How is she?" fell almost pathetically from his lips. If she were a little better his happiness knew no bounds, but if worse, his spirits sank to zero; and one night, when the child was really in danger, there ensued a scene which the Hall servants remembered for months. The doctors would not allow him to remain in the room, so he paced the corridor, almost distraught; and as no one dared say a word to comfort him without the fear of instant dismissal, he was left to drink his cup of bitterness alone.

But Patricia, coming off duty an hour later, brought him the welcome news that Phyllis was asleep and the crisis almost past; and inducing him to accompany her to the adjoining housekeeper's room, talked to him quietly for a little while. She looked pale from lack of sleep, and her eyes were heavy; but in his stress of mind and self-absorption he scarcely spared her a thought.

"Do you really think she will get better—on your word of honour?" he asked, for the hundredth time; "or are you only saying it to comfort me? I don't want to be buoyed up by false hopes; I would rather know the worst. I— Oh dear, how my head seems to spin! Or is it the room that is going round like a top?"

The girl helped him to a chair, and forced him to take a little brandy.

"No wonder you are exhausted," she said, when he was somewhat revived. "You are wearing yourself out; your nerves are constantly on the rack. I don't understand you at all, Mr. Moore. In public life you have the courage and strength of a giant—I have been reading about you only this morning in the

Post; but in private life—here—you behave just like a nervous woman. I really feel quite ashamed of you before the doctors. If you do not take care, they will form a very poor opinion of the Prime Minister's fortitude."

She spoke boldly, knowing that the rebuke was just what he needed, and that it would have a salutary effect. The Premier regarded her with astonishment, and a sharp rejoinder rose to his lips; but he repressed it, and the momentary gleam of anger died out of his eyes.

"You are right," he returned, his hands falling dejectedly to his side; "but I have had so much worry lately; I think my nerves are unstrung. And you don't know—what it is to love a child—as I love my Phyllis."

Her eyes deepened with feeling. "Ah, but I do!" she said, with a sudden catch in her voice. "I too have a child—a little darling whom I may never see again, although he is as dear to me as your little girl is to you. But I am brave, or at least I try to be. . . . And Phyllis will get better. My case is more hopeless than yours."

"Phyllis will get better?" He grasped at the words as a drowning man clutches a straw. "I pray God she may! I pray God she may!" Then he leant his head against his hands, and continued, as though speaking to himself: "I am not superstitious—a sensible man has no right to give way to such folly; but I thought the judgment of Heaven had fallen when Phyllis was taken ill. The Jews. . . . They are the bane of my life . . . they would pay me out if they could. Pharaoh oppressed them, and was smitten with the ten plagues. . . . But I won't

be beaten; I *won't*. . . . Not if fifty plagues come on my people—not if Phyllis dies. *If Phyllis dies* . . . Good God, what am I saying? She must not die. . . . Any judgment from Heaven—but not that . . . my one little ewe lamb. Eh?" he added thickly, as Patricia made a movement. "What was I talking about? The brandy has got into my head, I think. Let me go—into the garden; I must have air."

He stumbled up to the French window, which, by means of a flight of steps, gave access to the lawn. Patricia assisted him to descend, and rang hastily for his valet. Then she returned to the sick-room, thereby incurring the displeasure of the doctor; for in the hours that she was not on duty it was necessary that she should rest.

"I am on my way to bed now," she whispered, glancing tenderly at the unconscious child; "but I wanted to tell you something, doctor. Mr. Moore seems very much unstrung, and I should like you to prescribe for him before you go. He has to preside at a Cabinet Meeting to-morrow, and unless he sleeps to-night, I am sure he will be unable to attend."

The physician nodded.

"Very well, I will, as soon as I have given my instructions for the night to nurse," he whispered back. "And now, Lady Patricia, I must insist on you going to bed; otherwise, we shall be having you on the sick-list too."

The girl smiled, and quietly withdrew; but although she was tired, she felt little inclination for sleep. The stray glimpse into the secret chambers of the Premier's mind had filled her with all sorts of curious cogitations, and she could not help pondering on the strange character of the man. He was

evidently suffering either from distorted mental vision or—as Mamie had said—from remorse; and his recently-grey hair and haggard features testified that his health was being injured in consequence. But if that was the case—if his part in connection with the Expulsion was weighing so heavily on his mind, why did he not seek to atone for his action by advocating retractive measures? If he were a brave man—and his brilliant Parliamentary career proved him to be a morally strong one—why did he shrink from owning himself to have been in the wrong? Was it cowardice or sheer obstinacy which made him hold on grimly to his original views in spite of his inmost convictions? And how long would he be able to maintain that line of conduct—how long before the great mind would over-balance itself, and travel along the course which led to insanity? Could it be possible that they should ever see "*that noble and most sovereign reason, like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh?*"

But the next morning she found him as abrupt and self-possessed as usual. All traces of his recent emotion had disappeared, and he had evidently regained complete command over himself. The child had passed a better night, and his matutinal visit to the sick-room caused him such satisfaction that he was able to leave for London almost as soon as the doctor had been. And that day his dialectics at the Foreign Office were more irresistible than ever; he was once more his old self, now that the danger to his child was past.

Patricia found the period of the little girl's convalescence more trying than the actual illness, for there seemed more to do, and Phyllis was often

peevish and cross. Lady Chesterwood and Mrs. Lowther called every day, and sometimes twice a day; but unless she changed all her clothes, for fear the germs of infection should—according to the Countess—lurk in the folds of her nursing costume, she could not see them, and often she was obliged to let them go away: so that all communication with the outer world had practically ceased for the present, and of the daily inquirers who drove up to the Hall she saw not one. She looked over the visitors' book sometimes, and collected the numerous visiting-cards for Phyllis to play with; but although some of the names were so familiar that they called up vivid remembrances of the days of her early girlhood, she felt no desire to see any of these quondam friends. Whether they knew of her presence in the Premier's mansion she knew not; but it was likely that Mamie had spread the news.

One afternoon, however, a card was brought up to her which dispelled her usual indifference, and caused the colour to mount to her cheeks. It bore the inscription "Sir Ferdinand Montella," and on the reverse side the intimation of his immediate return to Haifa. Scarcely pausing to smooth her fair hair, Patricia rushed down to receive him; for although she had never seen him before, she looked upon him as a link from the East.

His visit was the best tonic she could have taken, for his breezy manner had an exhilarating effect. He brought good news of her beloved ones in Palestine, inasmuch as they were both well, and the baby bonnier than ever. He expressed himself willing to take back any messages she cared to send, and apologised deeply for not having come before.

"I was so busy with my affair," he said, with the light of satisfaction in his eyes. "Thank goodness it's all settled, and I've won the case. I was the cat's-paw of another fellow, you know; and I could not have come forward before without betraying him. But now he is dead, and I have been able to prove my innocence; and now that I am a free and honourable man in the sight of the world, I am going back to marry my little Raie."

Patricia held out her hands.

"I am very glad," she said sincerely. "I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. And I hope you and Raie will be very happy; she is a sweet girl, and will make you an admirable wife."

"So I think," he returned, with a glad smile, as his grasp on her fingers relaxed. "I believe we were cut out for each other; it was love at first sight, anyway. But I don't want to talk about myself, Patricia; I want to know something about you. Lionel will be full of questions when I get back. I was astonished when Mrs. Lowther informed me that you were here. Whatever made you walk direct into the lion's mouth?"

"Providence, or a combination of circumstances," she answered slowly. "When I advised Mrs. Lowther to rent Ivydene for a year, I had quite forgotten that Ravenscroft Hall was so near; and you see, Lady Chesterwood was in such trouble that I was bound to offer to help. I do hope Lionel will not be angry; I would never have become an inmate of the Premier's household under any other circumstances, and I shall leave as soon as I can. They have treated me very courteously here; I cannot complain."

"It seems so strange—so unnecessary," he said, with a puzzled expression, "that you, a Montella by marriage, should go out of your way to nurse the child of an anti-Semite. It is heaping coals of fire on his head with a vengeance. I cannot understand how the man could accept your services if he has any pride about him at all."

"You do not know him, Ferdinand. He has pride, but he would not let it stand in the way where the welfare of his child was concerned. Besides, I did it for Mamie's sake; her husband was my first-cousin. And, do you know, I am glad I came. I believe I shall be able to convert the Premier before I leave."

"Convert the Premier," he repeated, with an ironical smile. "What to?—Judaism?"

She laughed.

"Not quite; but you are not far wrong. I want to cure him of his anti-Semitic mania, and so far I have progressed well. At first I dare not mention the Jewish question to him; but now that I have nursed his child through a serious illness, he is beginning to trust me, and to listen to what I choose to say."

"But do you really think that you, a mere woman —I had almost said child—can influence Athelstan Moore?" he asked incredulously. "Why, I know of no one in England who is able to do that."

Patricia was too sensible to be piqued by his scepticism.

"I do think so," she returned, with enthusiasm. "Mr. Moore is a man who can be led, but not driven. You know what Shakespeare says:

> 'What thou wilt
> Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile,
> Than hew to 't with thy sword.'

Mr. Lawson Holmes and his colleagues might talk to him till Doomsday without the slightest effect, because he is strenuously determined to oppose them; but I have the opportunity of approaching him in his tenderest moments—when he is with his child. There are some cases in which a 'mere woman' can do more than the strongest man."

He glanced at her with admiration, not unmixed with wonder.

"And if you do cure him of his anti-Semitic mania, as you call it," he said slowly, "what will be the practical result?"

"I cannot say; but it will be a victory worth achieving. Everyone knows how the Premier dominates the Government, both collectively and individually—how they have not the courage to move a step without his approval, how they follow him just like a flock of sheep. Cure him of his anti-Semitism, and there is no knowing what may happen. Do not discourage me, Ferdinand, I mean to try very hard."

The clock struck four, and warned her that she was due in the sick-room; but she had so many messages to send that she could scarcely bear to tear herself away. If she had only known of his coming, she would have loaded him with presents for her dear ones, but he intended to start on the morrow, and it was too late to get anything now. So she was obliged to be content with sending her love—so much of it that Ferdinand laughingly declared he would never be able to carry it; and she wept a little in spite of his cheerful words. Then she said good-bye, and went to her own room for a few minutes to finish her cry.

It might be a long time before she saw a Montella again.

CHAPTER IV

LADY PATRICIA'S CONQUEST

SLOWLY, but surely, Phyllis Moore crept back to health, and as the danger of infection was over, Lady Chesterwood and Leslie returned to the Hall. The child had been ordered to Bournemouth to recuperate her lost strength, but the weather was so unfavourable that her father thought it advisable to wait for a possible improvement. He himself would not be able to leave London until the Christmas recess, and was rather glad than otherwise of the enforced delay.

Patricia was asked to accompany them, in order that her health might also benefit by the change; but as her services were no longer required, she politely but firmly declined. She acknowledged to Mamie that her stay at Ravenscroft Hall had been somewhat of a strain; and although she was glad to have been of use at so urgent a time, she did not care to remain as the Premier's guest.

Athelstan Moore had shown very little appreciation of her magnanimity during the child's illness, but as her stay drew to a close he gradually unbent, and on the last night he made an effort to express his gratitude for her kindness. Perhaps he felt more demonstrative than usual, for all Richmond was rejoicing at his little daughter's happy recovery;

and they had just returned from a crowded thanksgiving service at the parish church. He took her into the library after dinner on the pretext of showing her a particular *edition de luxe*, but in reality it was because he had something to say. He fidgeted uneasily with his diamond stud, and launched forth into a long explanation concerning the merits of his various editions of Shakespeare, whilst Patricia, knowing that he had not brought her there to discuss bibliography, waited as patiently as she could.

She sat down in front of the blazing log-fire, and watched him from the depths of a heavy arm-chair. He looked almost handsome that night, in spite of the lines on his forehead, and seemed to have regained a little of his former sprightliness. Yet, recollecting his visit to her father on the day of her marriage, she recognised a great difference. She remembered how his short, thick-set figure had bristled with indignation, and how the steely grey eyes had gleamed. She remembered his gestures—sharp, stern, commanding, just as the political caricaturists had pictured him in their cartoons—but there was little of that fiery alertness in his bearing now. He looked like a man who had in some peculiar way lost all verve: the features, the form, and the voice remained, but the animation which had given life to the whole personality was gone.

Abruptly finishing his superfluous dissertation, he took up his position on the hearthrug, with his back to the fire, and gazed moodily down at the parquet floor. Then glancing up suddenly his eye caught Patricia's, and his face lit up with the faintest glimmer of a smile.

"I want to ask you something," he said, leaning his

arm against the oaken mantel-shelf. "In reviewing the events of the last three weeks, it has struck me as curious that you, of all persons, should have nursed my little girl, since neither she nor I had the slightest claim on you. Tell me, Lady Patricia, and do not be offended at my question—why did you do it?"

"Why?" She hesitated. "Oh, because I thought it was a case in which I could assist. I am always ready to help *anyone* in trouble, if I can."

"I see. You did it for charity's sake. If it had been my lodge-keeper's child you would have nursed her with equal willingness and care?"

"Certainly."

"Ah!" His exclamation was sharp and gruff. "Then you did not do it as a personal favour to me?

"No." She met his gaze steadily. "I did not do it for you."

There was an uncomfortable pause. He turned round and gave the fire a vigorous poke, which sent the flames roaring up the chimney. The light caught the diamond star at her breast, and set it scintillating with prismatic rays. Then with his eyes almost involuntarily set on the jewel, he addressed her again.

"It is as well to know the truth," he said, with feigned nonchalance. "Otherwise I might have flattered myself that you nursed Phyllis for my sake. I suppose, in reality, you consider me more of an enemy than a friend?"

"I think I have reason to do so," she returned, with a sigh.

"On account of the Jewish question?" he asked slowly.

"Yes."

"I am sorry." He spread his hands deprecatingly. "But you see it is not my fault that you happened to marry a Jew. You know I have no love for that race."

"I do know, to my sorrow," she answered quietly. "But I cannot understand it at all. Mr. Moore, why are you an anti-Semite?"

The question was given with such direct simplicity that for a moment he was at a loss for a reply. This was carrying the war into the enemy's country.

"Why am I an anti-Semite?" he repeated, with hesitation. "Well, that is too large a matter to be entered into now. My motives are both political and personal; but they can be summed up in one sentence: I hate the Jews.'

"And yet you call yourself a Christian!" she said, with contempt.

His cheeks flushed. "Lady Patricia!" he exclaimed, half angrily; but she was undismayed.

"You do call yourself a Christian," she continued calmly. "You are publicly known as one of the staunchest of churchmen, and you are president of several church societies. Mr. Moore, did Christ hate the Jews?"

There was silence, but she scarcely waited for a response. "You know He did not," she went on quickly. "He healed them of their diseases, toiled for them, suffered for them, died for them, loved them to the end. To be at the same time a Christian and an anti-Semite is absolutely impossible. More: if England is anti-Semitic, she cannot be Christian, and (I quote from one of your own speeches now) —the day England ceases to be Christian she ceases to be great. Oh, cannot you see the inconsistency

of your position? How could you reconcile it with your conscience to persecute the Jews?"

She raised her sweet face in passionate appeal. The words seemed to come direct from her heart, and her ardour expressed itself in the depths of her blue eyes. Moore stared at her with unconcealed astonishment. No one—not even his friend Lawson Holmes—had dared to be so outspoken; but this gentle girl evidently was not afraid. And her words struck home: they pierced the outer shield of his obstinacy, and penetrated to the true self within; they touched the inmost chords of his troubled emotions, and set them quivering like the strings of a lyre. Yet he displayed no resentment, rather was he abashed: for his usual flow of language deserted him; he could, for once, find no counter-reply.

"Persecution is an accommodating term," he said, at last. "Place the smallest restriction on the liberty of a sect, and immediately they proclaim themselves martyrs. We have no desire to 'persecute' the Jews; we have used neither the knout nor the rack. For myself, all I desire is to eliminate everything Jewish from our English life; nothing more."

"To eliminate everything Jewish?" she repeated, unable to conceal a touch of scorn. "Why, it cannot be done; the Jews have left too great an impress on the world. Religion, history, science, the fine arts, commerce, is there anything in which they have never had a place? We went to church this evening: was your enjoyment of the anthem marred because the music was composed by Mendelssohn, a Jew? And has it ever occurred to you that our Liturgy is almost entirely of Jewish origin? The *Magnificat*—what is it but the joy-song

of a Jewish maiden?—the *Nunc Dimittis*, that of Simeon the Jew? Why, the whole Bible belongs to the Jews—is Jewish literature from Genesis to Revelations. And yet you would eliminate everything Jewish from your thoughts. As well try to wipe out the past and re-create the world!"

She paused as the door opened to admit the Countess, who was tired of her own society, and wondered what the two could be talking about. Mamie considered it selfish of her husband to monopolise the girl's company on the last night of her stay; but noticing the gravity of his expression, she conquered her desire to tell him so.

"I hope you have thanked Patricia nicely for her kindness to Phyllis," she said, with complacence, as she settled herself in the opposite arm-chair. "Have you decided what form the memento is to take?"

Her husband looked almost disconcerted. "Not yet," he returned dryly. "When I led up to the subject we both went off at a tangent; however, the evening is yet young."

"We want to give you a little souvenir of your visit," Mamie explained eagerly; "but we could not decide as to what it should be, so we thought we had better ask you. I suggested a crescent brooch to replace the one you gave to the Unemployed. Do you remember that day, Patricia? What a tender-hearted goose you were!"

Patricia's colour rose.

"You are very good," she said, addressing them both, and inwardly determining not to accept any reward for her services, however delicately it might be offered. "But I really have more jewellery than I can wear already. I would rather not have a present,

if you don't mind; indeed, I haven't the faintest idea what to choose. I have all I want."

The Premier seemed to be turning over something in his mind.

"All you want?" he repeated slowly; "except—your husband."

Mamie cast him a sharp glance of interrogation, but he took no notice, and advanced towards his guest.

"Lady Patricia," he said impressively, "you do want your husband?"

"Want him?" She choked down a sob. "Yes, I do want him; I long for him night and day! But you are unkind: don't tease me, Mr. Moore!"

The tears welled up in her eyes, and gathered slowly on her beautiful lashes. She felt as if he were playing with her as a cat plays with a mouse, and her whole being rose in revolt at such a lack of generous feeling. But the Premier's features showed no sign of intended satire; he had evidently spoken in perfect faith.

"I am not teasing you," he said, in a peculiarly quiet voice. "Patricia, I have to make an important decision before ten o'clock to-morrow morning. A month ago I should have given my answer without the slightest hesitation, but now—now I see that things are different to what they appeared a little while ago. Supposing the Edict of Expulsion were cancelled, would your husband return?"

"The Edict cancelled!" She could scarcely believe her ears. "Do you mean that England will open her doors to the Jews again?" she asked, in a tone of excitement. "Oh, it seems too good to be true; I can scarcely believe it." She took a deep

breath. "Of course Lionel would come back; Haifa would soon empty itself of its English population. But, Mr. Moore, is it true? Do you really—*really* mean it?"

"It is a possibility," he returned, as though with an effort. "Statistics show that trade and commerce have deteriorated since the Expulsion; and the people are clamouring for the Jews' return. To-morrow the question comes up in Parliament, and I shall make a speech either for or against. My colleagues, knowing my views, anticipate my opposition; but—"

"But you will surprise them all by supporting the resolution," she interpolated quickly. "Mr. Moore, you know the Expulsion Act has been a weight on your mind ever since it was put into force; you know that it was all a gross miscarriage of justice. If the Jews have suffered through it, so has England, so have you. Here is a Heaven-sent opportunity to retrieve your mistake!"

The Premier winced, scarcely relishing such frank condemnation. If he were obliged to drink the cup of defeat he shrank from having it offered in that way. But Patricia had conquered; and the long arguments in which she had so patiently engaged with him all through his child's convalescence were about to bear fruit. She had known all along that her insistent pleading was making some little impression on his stubborn heart; but she had never dared to think that he would so easily surrender. Her questions fell thick and fast as she considered the details of the proposed repeal, and she volunteered more than one pertinent remark. The Premier sighed as he noticed her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes; for what was to her a cause of profound

joyfulness, meant to him a great renunciation. Perhaps the girl never knew what the abandonment of his principles really cost him; it was like an upheaval of his whole political life.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before they parted for the night, and even then Patricia seemed inclined to linger. Hope had sprung up anew within her breast, and the thought of her husband's probable return invested her with fresh life and energy. She listened to Mamie's cheerful prognostication of the future with a happy smile, never thinking that her elation perhaps jarred upon her host. But when the clock struck the hour she approached him to say good-night, and the gladness on her face grew more subdued.

"Good-night, Mr. Moore," she said, holding out her hand. "I am sorry if I hurt you by what I said before, and if—if you will have me as a friend—?"

He bent over the hand and raised it to his lips.

"Certainly we are friends, Patricia," he answered quietly, with an involuntary sigh. "Moore—the anti-Semite—is dead."

"And Mr. Moore the Christian statesman lives!" She glanced into his face with shining eyes. "Oh, I am so glad—so glad! I feel as if I could sing a *Te Deum* of praise!"

THE LAST CHAPTER

THE SKIRT OF A JEW

So the English nation decided that it was more to their advantage to "take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew" than to avoid him altogether; and the Expulsion Act was eventually repealed. But Parliament was too wary to fall into the old error of allowing unrestricted immigration, and determined to keep the pauper alien away from English shores. Fortunately this class was rapidly becoming extinct, for in the Holy Land there was work and a welcome for all, and the term "pauper alien" would soon be as worn-out as the dodo. Moreover, the establishment of the Jews in Palestine meant an end to the atrocities to which they had been subjected from time to time in Eastern Europe: for in their own land they were at least free. And even though the English population flowed steadily back to the dearly-loved native country, there were still enough Jews in Palestine to promote the general welfare of the Jewish State. Indeed, the return of the Jews to England proved a beneficial check to the threatened over-crowding of the towns.

Haifa—as Patricia had predicted—soon lost its English citizens, and Lionel Montella found it easy to resign his post. His mother, preferring to remain in the Holy Land, went to live with Dr. and Mrs.

Engelmacher in Jerusalem, but intended to visit England once a year. The others made preparations to leave in the ensuing April; perhaps they were less susceptible to the claims of ancestry.

Patricia's joy knew no bounds, and she was so busy preparing for their return that the intermediate months seemed to have taken wings. With generous magnanimity her husband renounced the ownership of Burstall Abbey in favour of his step-brother; and she had been commissioned to see that the place was prepared for the reception of Sir Ferdinand and his bride. Lionel himself intended to stay at Ivydene, prior to purchasing a new and suitable town-house near Piccadilly, for Patricia had refused her father's offer of his mansion for the whole of the forthcoming season. So she occupied herself in beautifying the villa so far as its dimensions would allow, and spared no pains to make it as attractive as possible. She called Mrs. Lowther into the nursery one day to see the alterations she had made, and leaning against the dappled back of the rocking-horse, gave vent to the rapture which burned within her breast.

"To think that in a week's time my little Julian will be here!" she exclaimed, with joy. "And I thought when I left him that I should not see him for years!"

And then she proceeded to relate a pretty little anecdote of his infancy; for nothing gave her greater pleasure than to talk about her boy.

She looked so fair and radiant that Mrs. Lowther could not help congratulating her on her improved appearance. She went singing about the house as blithely as a lark, and the careworn expression on her face had entirely disappeared. The greater part

of her time was spent in the company of the Princess, who, with her husband, had just arrived on a visit to Ravenscroft Hall. Her Highness was delighted at the turn affairs had taken, and expressed keen satisfaction that her prophecy had been fulfilled.

"I told you I guessed the separation would not be for long, didn't I?" she said, when they first met; "but tell me, Pat, how are you going to arrange matters about Lionel's Judaism now?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," the girl rejoined, a ring of defiance in her voice; "there will be time enough to worry about that later on. Besides, Lady Montella means to stay in Jerusalem, so I shall feel comparatively free."

"You always speak of your respected mother-in-law as if she were a kind of policeman," said Lady Chesterwood, smiling. "Was her interference really so terrible as all that?"

Patricia nodded.

"Yes. You see Lady Montella is very nice, and one of the kindest and most religious women in the world, but her rigid Judaism is very difficult to get on with. To be honest, I am glad that she is making her home in Jerusalem; it is the best place for her under the circumstances."

"I wish I could send my mother-in-law to Jerusalem!" remarked the Princess feelingly. "She is always doing her utmost to upset my poor Karl. We have decided to stay away from Felsen-Schvoenig as long as we possibly can; but if we could ship her off to the Holy Land we might be able to go back."

Whereupon they agreed that there ought to be a special place for unwanted mothers-in-law; and talked a great deal of nonsense to that effect.

And so the time went on, until the long-looked-for day of the Montellas' return dawned at last. Patricia was up with the birds, thankful for the spring sunshine which streamed through the windows, and seemed to typify to her the brightness of her coming future. Directly after breakfast her friends from Ravenscroft Hall brought her some of the choicest flowers out of the Premier's conservatories, and gaily helped her to fill the rooms. But they considerately refused the invitation to accompany her to the station, thinking she would prefer to meet her people alone. They remained until the hour of departure, and then drove back to the Hall, the Countess making Patricia promise to bring her husband to see the Premier at the first opportunity.

In spite of her careful calculations, the expectant wife arrived at the station only just in time. The continental train came steaming into the terminus just as her brougham drew up alongside the platform, and the usual bustle and shouting of porters immediately ensued. Patricia looked about her in bewilderment, but in another moment she was surrounded by the party she sought. Sir Ferdinand and his happy young bride ; Mrs. Emanuel—elated at the thought of returning to her beloved Canonbury—with her little brood ; baby Julian fast asleep in the arms of the faithful Anne ; and last but not least, Lionel Montella, looking pale and somewhat thin, but happy withal. Patricia received her husband's embrace in silence, unable to say a word ; but he knew that her heart was full with a joy too deep for utterance, and her hand-clasp meant more to him than the choicest of flowery speeches.

It was not until they had parted from the others,

and were driving back to Richmond, that she remembered a non-arrival amongst the party.

"I thought Zillah Lorm intended to come, too," she said half wonderingly. "Did she leave you on the way?"

Montella exchanged a glance with Anne.

"Yes, darling, she left us on the way," he returned, with a sigh. "Poor Zillah! It is very sad."

Something in his tone arrested the girl's attention.

"What do you mean, dear?" she asked, with hesitation. "Is anything wrong?"

"The poor unfortunate woman threw herself overboard soon after we left Port Said, my lady," said Anne, as her master did not reply. "She was drowned almost before anyone knew, and the Lascars tried in vain to recover her body. Oh, dear, what excitement there was on the boat! We were all that upset we could talk of nothing else for days, she being such a comely young person and all!"

"So I should think. But how dreadful! Poor girl!" Her eyes filled. "What made her put such a terrible end to her life? Was she unhappy?"

"I am afraid so, dear," replied Montella quietly. "She seemed to have no aim in life, and to find everything as Dead Sea fruit. She was always pessimistic and despondent. I believe she wanted to return to England some months ago, and only remained for my mother's sake; yet when we eventually started, she expressed no pleasure at the thought of going home. On board the vessel she became engaged to an English officer, but quarrelled with him the night before her death. Whether that had anything to do with her suicide, however, we shall never know. It is unspeakably sad."

It was indeed sad, and Patricia could not help thinking about it for days. It seemed such a potent example of the consequence of a life unsustained by faith. She knew that poor Zillah Lorm had believed neither in God nor her fellow-creatures, and that to her the world had been naught but a great charnel-house of crushed and moribund desires. But she was unable to imagine the agony of mind which had caused the unhappy girl to throw herself into the sea. The tragedy scarce bore contemplation; its secret reason would remain a mystery to the end.

Not wishing to mar her husband's home-coming by the expression of gloomy sentiments, she avoided the subject after she had learnt the news. Arrived at Ivydene, little Julian awoke from his sleep just in time for tea, and delighted the mother's heart by his display of recognition and affection. Full of happiness, she assisted Anne to put him to bed, lingering by his little cot until he visited slumberland once more. Then she descended to spend a quiet evening with her husband *tête-à-tête;* for Mrs. Lowther considerately went to dine out with a friend.

It was not cold, but they had a fire lit for comfort's sake, and watched the cheerfully blazing embers as they talked. They had so much to say that they scarcely knew where to begin, and enjoyed each other's presence in silence for a little while. Patricia felt like a child who, after long waiting, had found its lost protector, and sat with her head nestled contentedly against Lionel's shoulder. Presently, however, her curiosity got the better of her; there were so many things she wanted to know.

He answered her questions concerning his doings in Palestine with gentle patience. Their enemy, Ben

Yetzel, had conquered, in so far as rigid orthodoxy throughout the Holy Land was to prevail, and he had had more than one skirmish with the Rabbi since she had taken her departure. Dr. Engelmacher, good-humoured and pliant as usual, had accepted the dictum with cheerful resignation, deeming it wiser to sacrifice his own view of the matter for the sake of peace. Most of the English people who availed themselves of the repealing of the Act retained a financial interest in Palestine, which would result in a constant communication between the two countries. The outlook on Jewish affairs, therefore, was of the brightest, and more promising than it had been since the time of the First Dispersion.

"And Lady Montella?" asked Patricia, when he had finished. "Did she approve of your returning to England and me, or would she have been better pleased if you had remained out there in spite of the cancelling of the Edict?"

"I am not sure, dear," was her husband's reply. "My mother is so fond of the Holy Land that she would have been delighted had I chosen to stay; but I should have been more than human had I remained under those circumstances. When the path which led to you became easy, how could I refrain from taking it? Only an exaggerated sense of duty would have made me act otherwise. Besides I wanted you so much, my darling. Those eight months of our separation were the hardest of my life."

"And of mine," she added softly, with a fervent pressure of his hand. "But, Lionel, I am surprised that your mother allowed you to bring baby Julian back to me. She seemed to think that I had no

further right to him since I could not teach him orthodox Judaism."

"I took the law into my hands in this instance, dear," he answered, dispelling the pucker on her brow with a kiss. "I told her that Julian was your child as well as mine, and that I was determined you should educate him in accordance with your conscience until he grew old enough to choose for himself. Besides, there's Ferdinand now to keep up the old traditions of the House; and as he has married a Jewess, we can reasonably hope for a Jewish heir."

"And you will not expect me to feign Judaism any more?" she asked wistfully.

"Certainly not. We shall settle the question by introducing a Jewish housekeeper to do all that is necessary. I have thoroughly made up my mind that the difference-in-creed bogey shall never come between us again. I am a Jew, and you are a Christian, and so long as we do our duty according to our respective convictions, no one has a right to expect any more. Thank God, there is now neither a fanatical Chief Rabbi nor a foolish Assimilation Act to interfere. We are free at last, and in such freedom there is happiness for us both. Set your mind at rest, my dear one; the troubles of the past can never return."

And Patricia gave a sigh of relief as she gazed into the heart of the fire. How broad-minded he was, and noble, and true!

"Dear boy!" she exclaimed softly. "I am the happiest creature in the world!"

The heaviness which endured for a night had been replaced by the joy of the morning. She felt that the suffering of the past months was as nothing

compared with the happiness which had dawned at last.

. . . . . .

They went to Ravenscroft Hall before the end of the week to pay their respects to the Premier and his wife. It was quite a summer's day—one which had wedged itself into April by a meteorological mistake—and they found their friends enjoying tea on the lawn. Lady Chesterwood presided, assisted by her sister, whilst Prince Karl pretended to be a waiter, to the intense delight of Phyllis and Leslie. The new-comers were provided with tea, and urged by the children to tip the waiter for his attention; after which they suddenly discovered Raie behind a neighbouring tree.

"I wanted to give you a surprise," she said laughingly, as she came forward and joined the group. "Ferdinand is indoors talking to Mr. Moore. We came over to Richmond this morning."

"But you did not find time to visit us?" said Patricia, aggrieved.

"Oh, we went with mamma and Harriet to the Isaacson's to lunch," was her apologetic reply. "Mamma insists on taking us to see all her friends; it is such a novelty for her to possess a married daughter."

She did not add that Mrs. Emanuel was so proud of "my daughter Lady Ferdinand" that she was anxious to exhibit her to all and sundry. She was so happy that what might have jarred upon her in other circumstances simply caused her amusement now.

"What do you intend to do with the she-dragon, Pat?" asked Mamie, when the conversation turned

on domestic affairs. "I suppose her services as lady-companion will no longer be required."

Patricia smiled. "I have two dear companions of my own now," she answered happily. "I shall have to find Mrs. Lowther another berth."

"Send her to Jerusalem," suggested the Princess naïvely; and Raie, unable to see the point of the remark, wondered why they laughed.

Lionel left them to finish their tea without him, and strolled through the grounds towards the house. The French windows at the north side stood invitingly open, and ascending the short flight of steps, he entered the room. It happened to be the Premier's library, and the shelves which lined the four walls were filled with books. In one corner stood a large writing-table, littered with documents of various descriptions; and above it hung a beautifully painted panel mounted in oak, and inscribed with a lengthy quotation from Shakespeare. Not caring to linger near the open bureau, Montella would have passed on; but the old English letters with their illuminated points attracted his attention, and half wondering what would be the substance of the Premier's motto, he paused a moment to read:

> "SALARINO—Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh; what's that good for?
>
> "SHYLOCK—To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same

means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge; if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction."

So this was the lesson which Athelstan Moore had set himself to learn! Lionel could scarcely repress an exclamation of surprise as his eye ran over the inscription. As in a flash, the revelation of what Moore's inward struggle must have meant burst in upon him; and he recognised the courage the great man had shown even in his defeat. Full of thought, the young champion of the Jews turned thoughtfully away, to be met by the Premier himself before he reached the door.

There was a moment of embarrassing silence as the two men confronted one another. The thoughts of both went back to the time of their antagonism, when hot and bitter words had been spoken on either side. But the Prime Minister was not long before he recovered himself, and with a softened light in his usually brilliant eyes, he held out his hand.

"Welcome back to England, Montella," he said, in a quiet but hearty voice. "We parted as enemies, but I trust we meet as friends?"

Lionel gripped his hand like a true Briton.

"I trust so," he returned, noticing almost with a pang of compunction how grey and old he looked. "It was never my wish to quarrel with you, Mr. Moore, but I could not help being a Jew."

"Of course you couldn't." He glanced towards the panel with a sigh. "And I know you are proud of it, too. We've been taught a hard lesson during your absence, Montella. Anti-Semitism doesn't answer in England, and it never will; for it's a savage and retrograde movement, incompatible both with our Christianity and our advanced state of civilisation. Strange that we had to have an Expulsion in order to find that out! The simplest truths are the most difficult to learn, it seems to me."

"They are, sometimes," acquiesced the young man, with respect; "but we had better forget the past, Mr. Moore. The Jew—in spite of popular tradition—does not bear malice, and now that our beloved England has returned our freedom to us, I am sure we shall be greater friends than ever before."

"God grant we may!" was the Premier's fervent reply.

He was no longer an enemy of the Jews. He had become their staunch ally.

THE END

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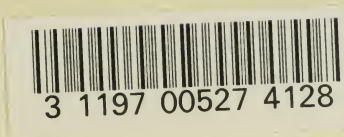

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